HARLEY QUINN

57
13+ TEEN
LEGACY #200
200
TNT
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TNT
FROM IVY
FROM THE BAT MAN
FROM YANICK AND ARIF 2023
TO BUD AND LOU from KRYPTO
ALL IN

For She's a Jolly Good Felon!

KALAN
OLIVARES
DODSON
DODSON
LOUISE

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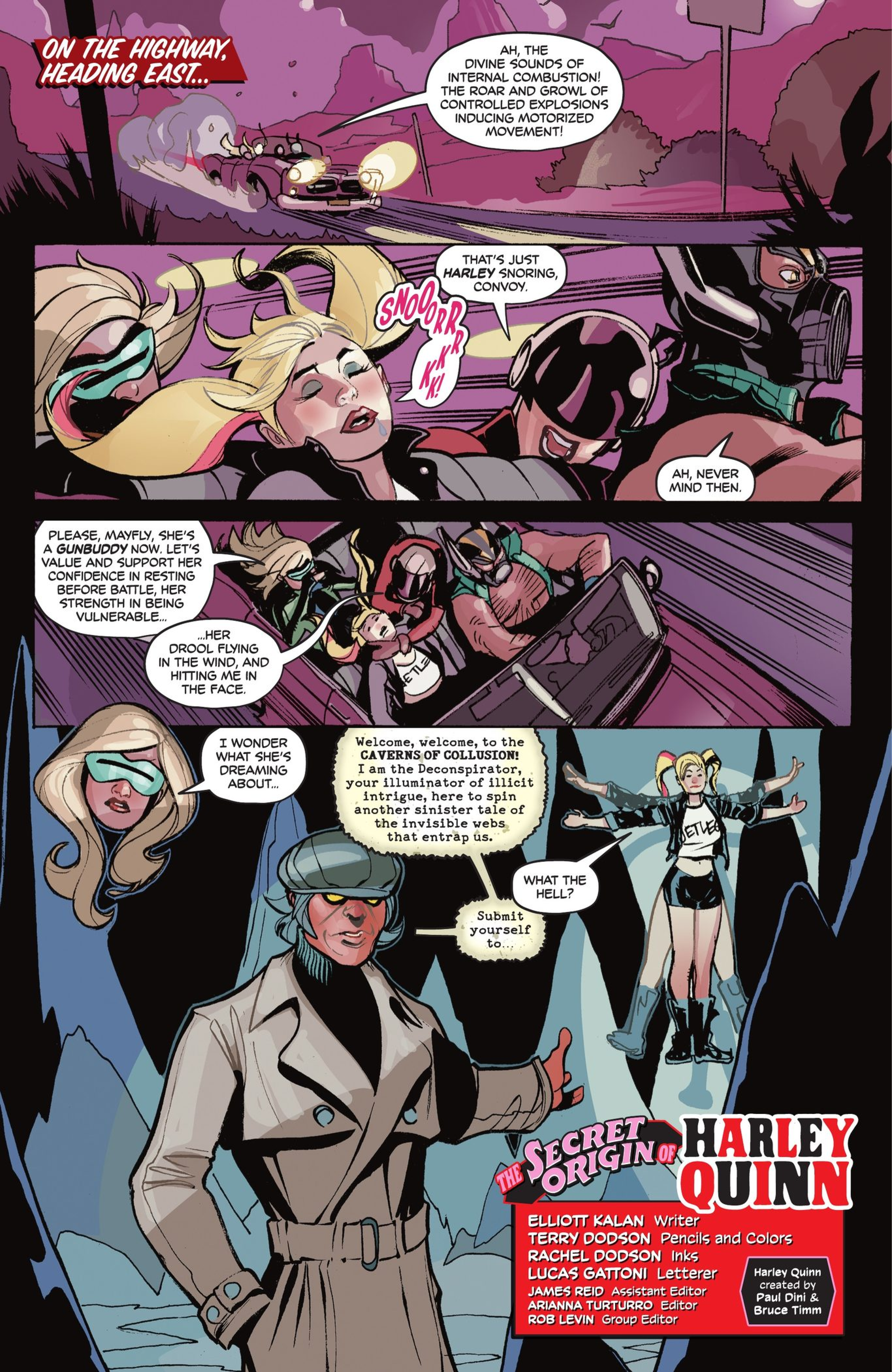
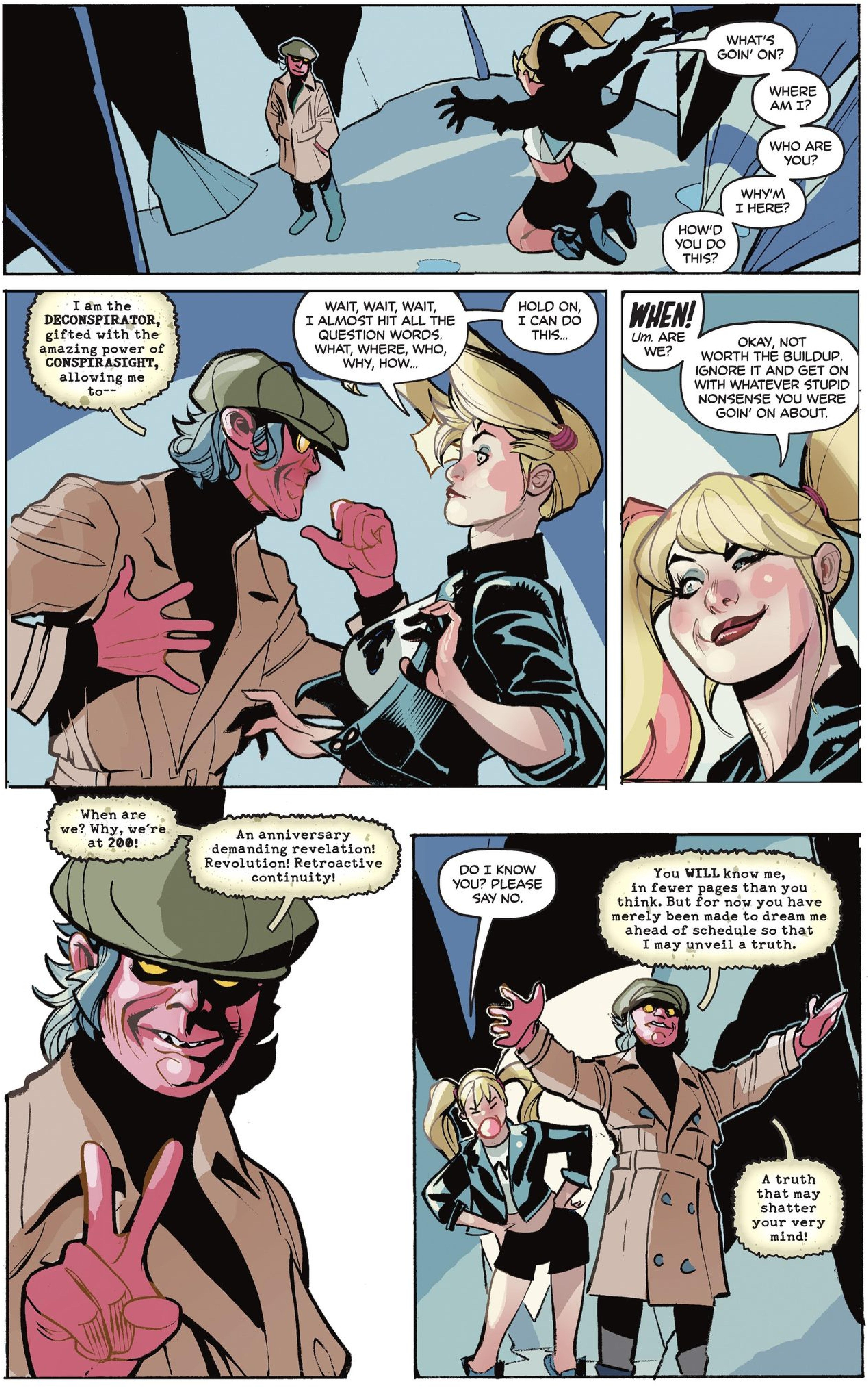
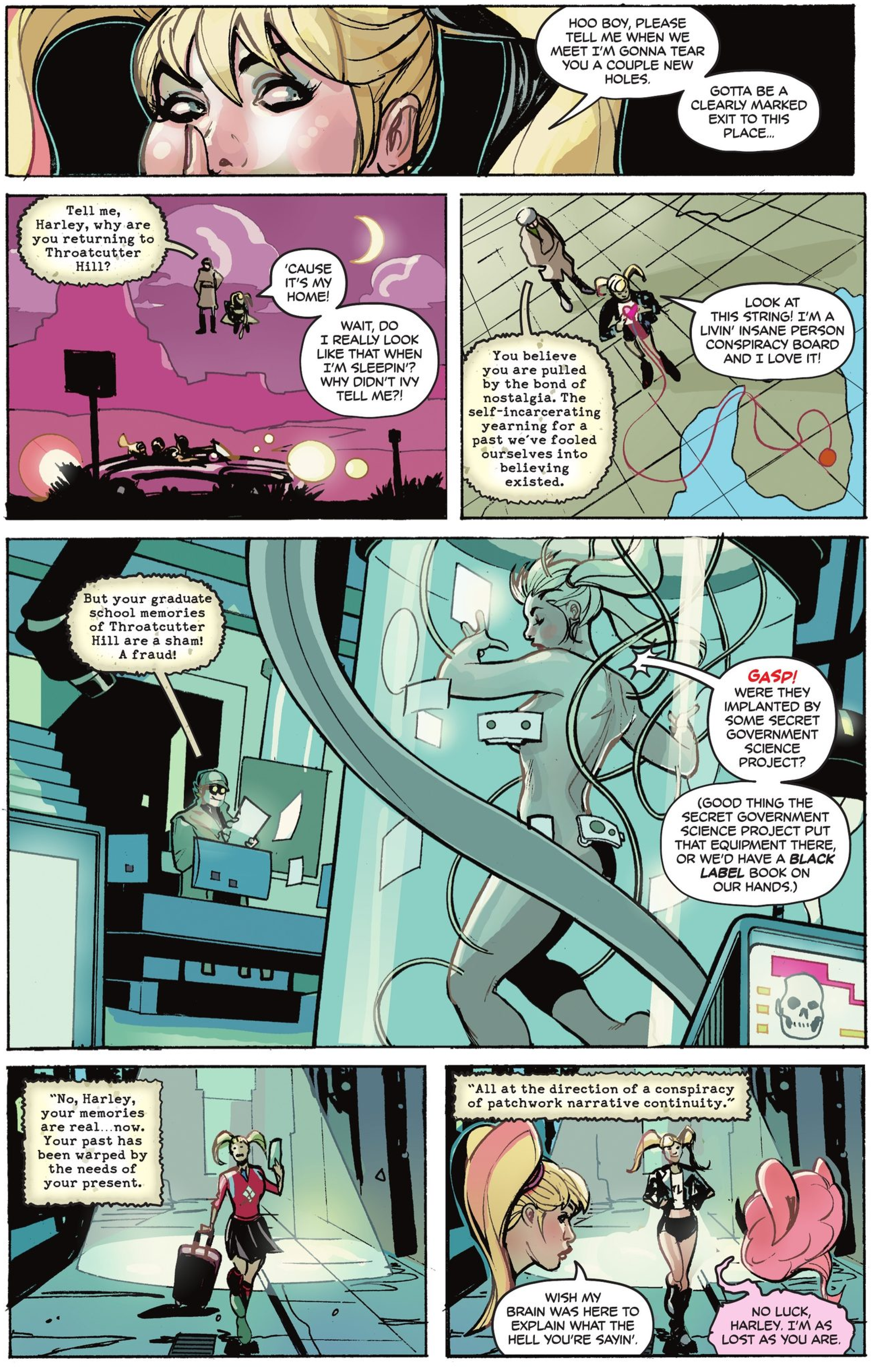

ON THE HIGHWAY, HEADING EAST...
AH, THE DIVINE SOUNDS OF INTERNAL COMBUSTION! THE ROAR AND GROWL OF CONTROLLED EXPLOSIONS INDUCING MOTORIZED MOVEMENT!
SNOOORRRKKK!
THAT'S JUST HARLEY SNORING, CONVOY.
AH, NEVER MIND THEN.
PLEASE, MAYFLY, SHE'S A GUNBUDDY NOW. LET'S VALUE AND SUPPORT HER CONFIDENCE IN RESTING BEFORE BATTLE, HER STRENGTH IN BEING VULNERABLE...
...HER DROOL FLYING IN THE WIND, AND HITTING ME IN THE FACE.
I WONDER WHAT SHE'S DREAMING ABOUT...
Welcome, welcome, to the CAVERNS OF COLLUSION! I am the Deconspirator, your illuminator of illicit intrigue, here to spin another sinister tale of the invisible webs that entrap us.
WHAT THE HELL?
Submit yourself to...

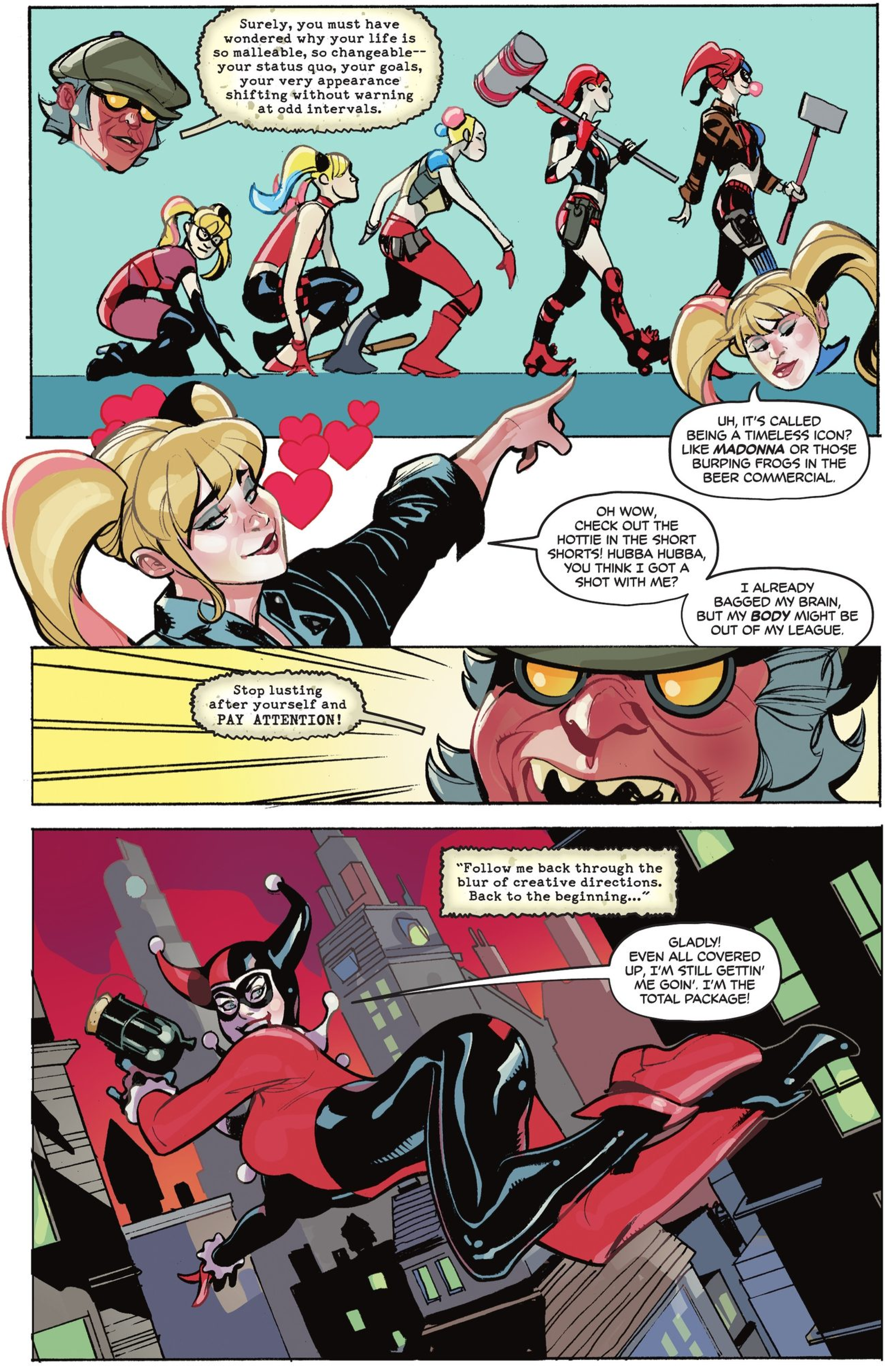
THE SECRET ORIGIN OF HARLEY QUINN

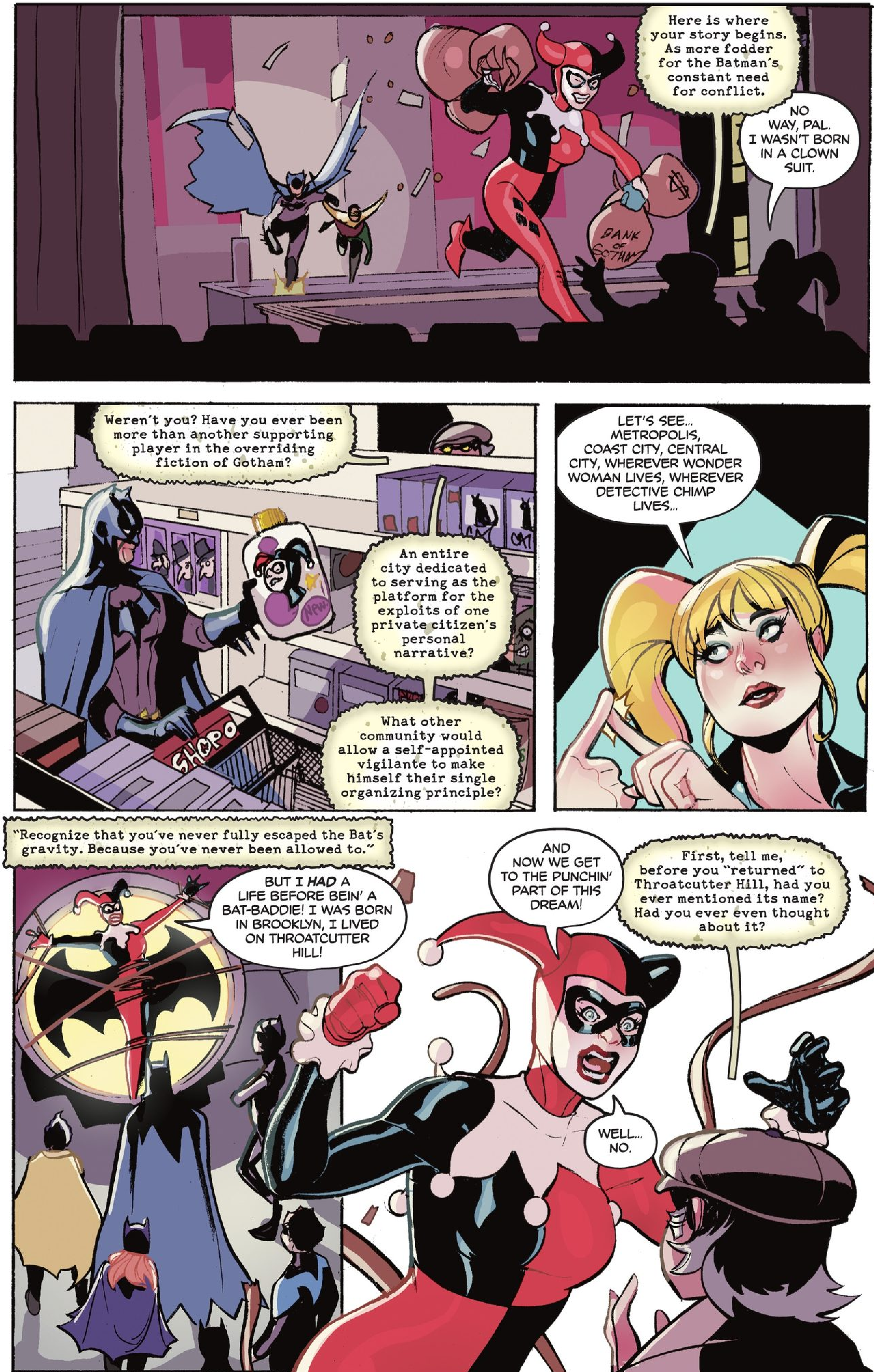
ELLIOTT KALAN Writer
TERRY DODSON Pencils and Colors
RACHEL DODSON Inks
LUCAS GATTONI Letterer
JAMES REID Assistant Editor
ARIANNA TURTURRO Editor
ROB LEVIN Group Editor

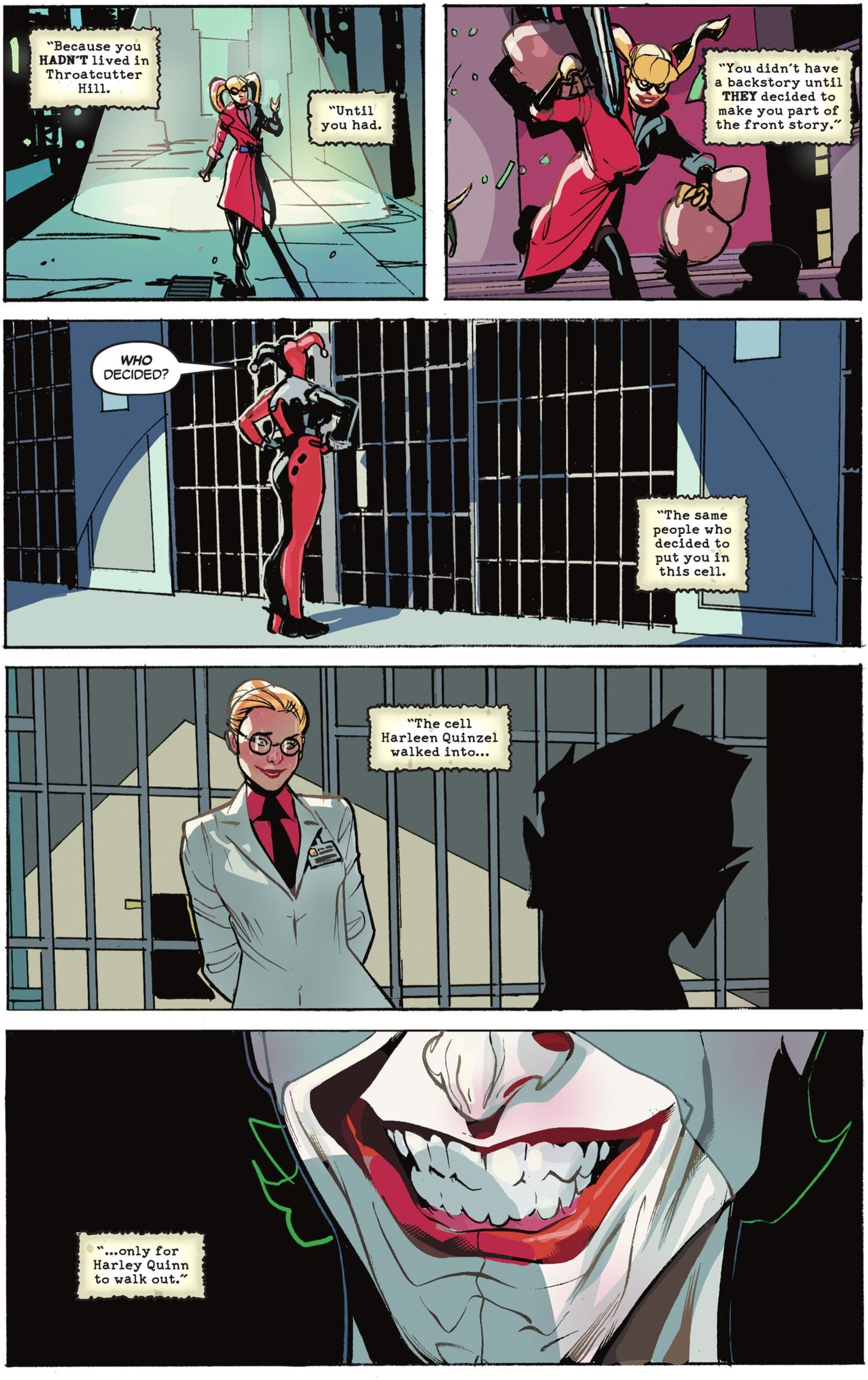
Harley Quinn created by Paul Dini & Bruce Timm

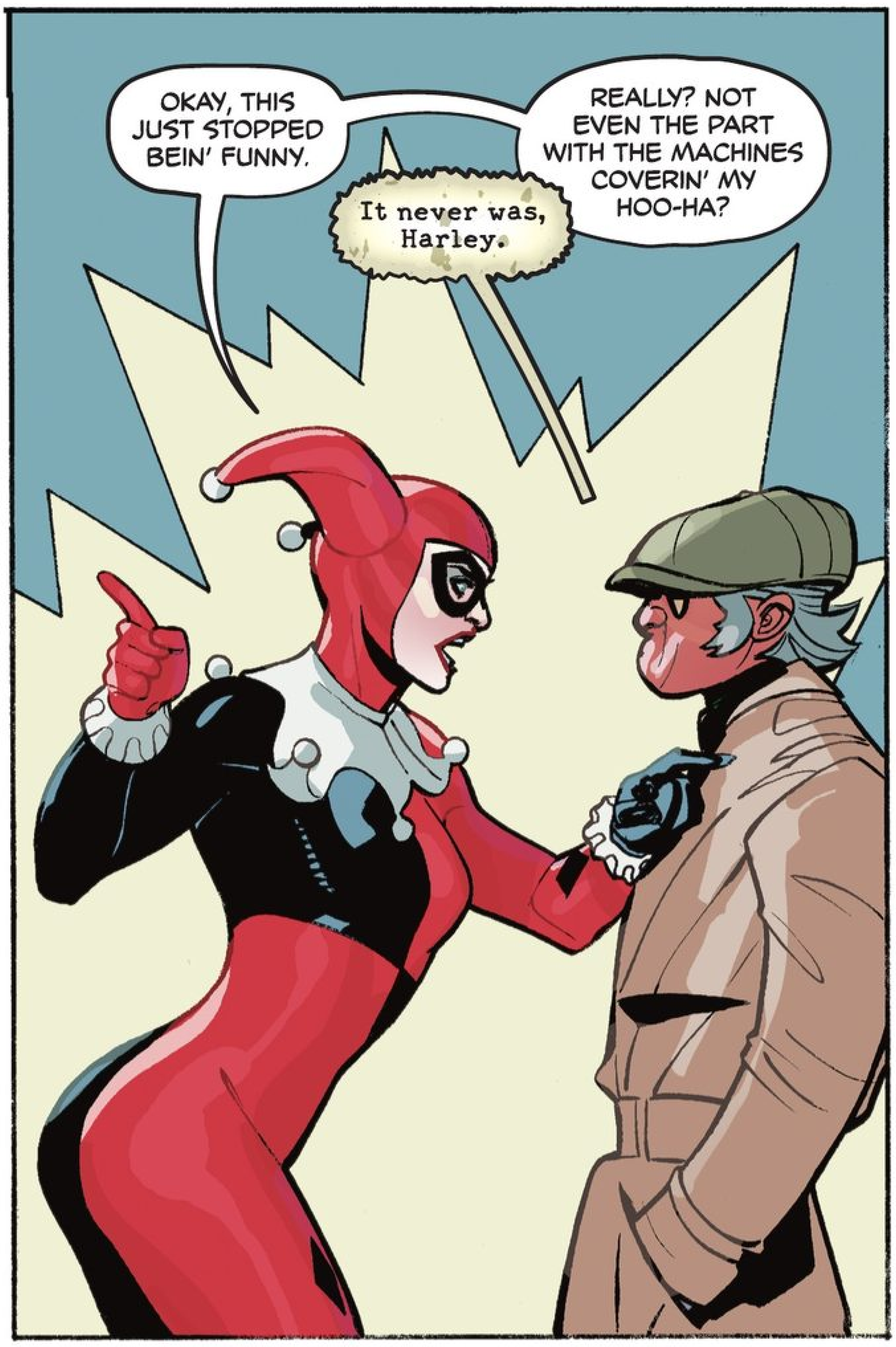

WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
WHERE AM I?
WHO ARE YOU?
WHY'M I HERE?
HOW'D YOU DO THIS?
I am the **DECONSPIRATOR,** gifted with the amazing power of **CONSPIRASIGHT,** allowing me to--
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT, I ALMOST HIT ALL THE QUESTION WORDS. WHAT, WHERE, WHO, WHY, HOW...
HOLD ON, I CAN DO THIS...
WHEN!
Um. ARE WE?
OKAY, NOT WORTH THE BUILDUP. IGNORE IT AND GET ON WITH WHATEVER STUPID NONSENSE YOU WERE GOIN' ON ABOUT.
When are we? Why, we're at **200!**
An anniversary demanding revelation! Revolution! Retroactive continuity!
DO I KNOW YOU? PLEASE SAY NO.
You **WILL** know me, in fewer pages than you think. But for now you have merely been made to dream me ahead of schedule so that I may unveil a truth.
A truth that may shatter your very mind!

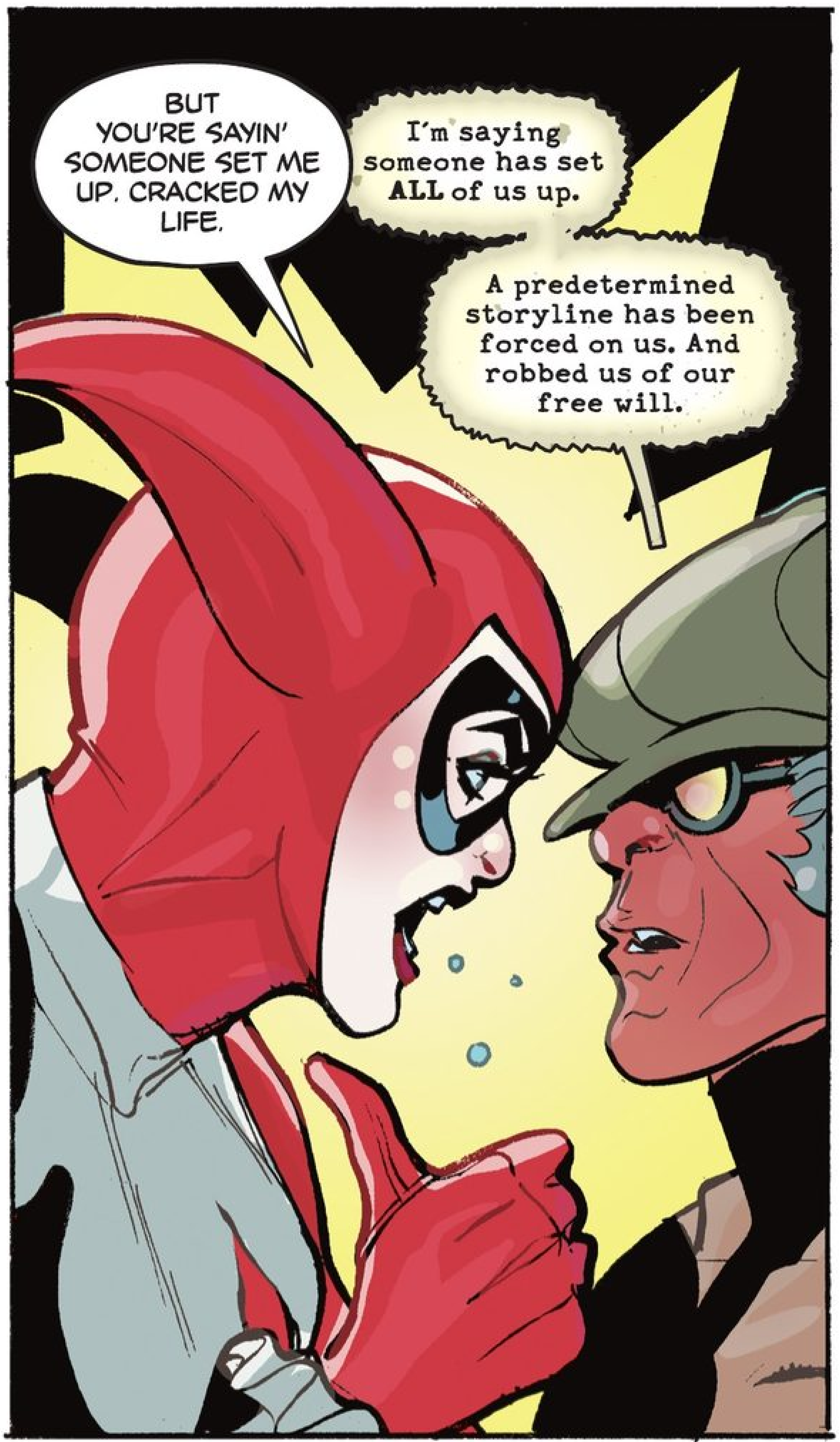

HOO BOY, PLEASE TELL ME WHEN WE MEET I'M GONNA TEAR YOU A COUPLE NEW HOLES.
GOTTA BE A CLEARLY MARKED EXIT TO THIS PLACE...
Tell me, Harley, why are you returning to Throatcutter Hill?
'CAUSE IT'S MY HOME!
WAIT, DO I REALLY LOOK LIKE THAT WHEN I'M SLEEPIN'? WHY DIDN'T IVY TELL ME?!
LOOK AT THIS STRING! I'M A LIVIN' INSANE PERSON CONSPIRACY BOARD AND I LOVE IT!
You believe you are pulled by the bond of nostalgia. The self-incarcerating yearning for a past we've fooled ourselves into believing existed.
But your graduate school memories of Throatcutter Hill are a sham! A fraud!
GASP! WERE THEY IMPLANTED BY SOME SECRET GOVERNMENT SCIENCE PROJECT?
(GOOD THING THE SECRET GOVERNMENT SCIENCE PROJECT PUT THAT EQUIPMENT THERE, OR WE'D HAVE A BLACK LABEL BOOK ON OUR HANDS.)
"No, Harley, your memories are real...now. Your past has been warped by the needs of your present.
"All at the direction of a conspiracy of patchwork narrative continuity."
WISH MY BRAIN WAS HERE TO EXPLAIN WHAT THE HELL YOU'RE SAYIN'.
NO LUCK, HARLEY. I'M AS LOST AS YOU ARE.

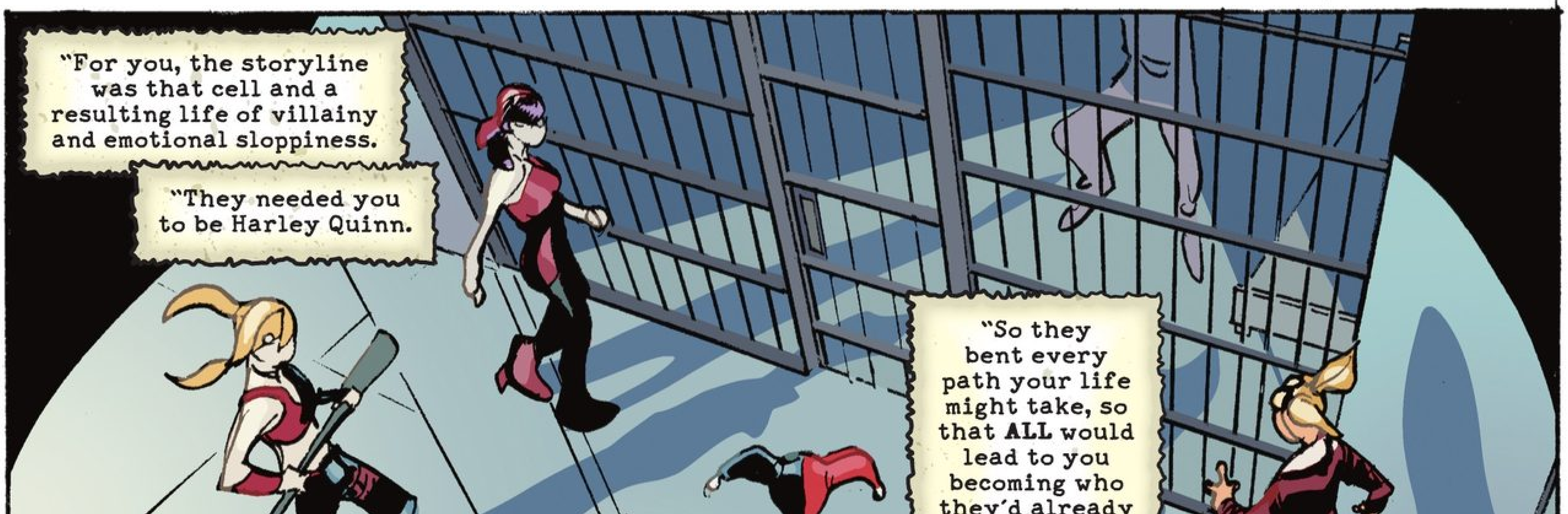

Surely, you must have wondered why your life is so malleable, so changeable-- your status quo, your goals, your very appearance shifting without warning at odd intervals.
UH, IT'S CALLED BEING A TIMELESS ICON? LIKE **MADONNA** OR THOSE BURPING FROGS IN THE BEER COMMERCIAL.
OH WOW, CHECK OUT THE HOTTIE IN THE SHORT SHORTS! HUBBA HUBBA, YOU THINK I GOT A SHOT WITH ME?
I ALREADY BAGGED MY BRAIN, BUT MY **BODY** MIGHT BE OUT OF MY LEAGUE.
Stop lusting after yourself and PAY ATTENTION!
"Follow me back through the blur of creative directions. Back to the beginning..."
GLADLY! EVEN ALL COVERED UP, I'M STILL GETTIN' ME GOIN'. I'M THE TOTAL PACKAGE!

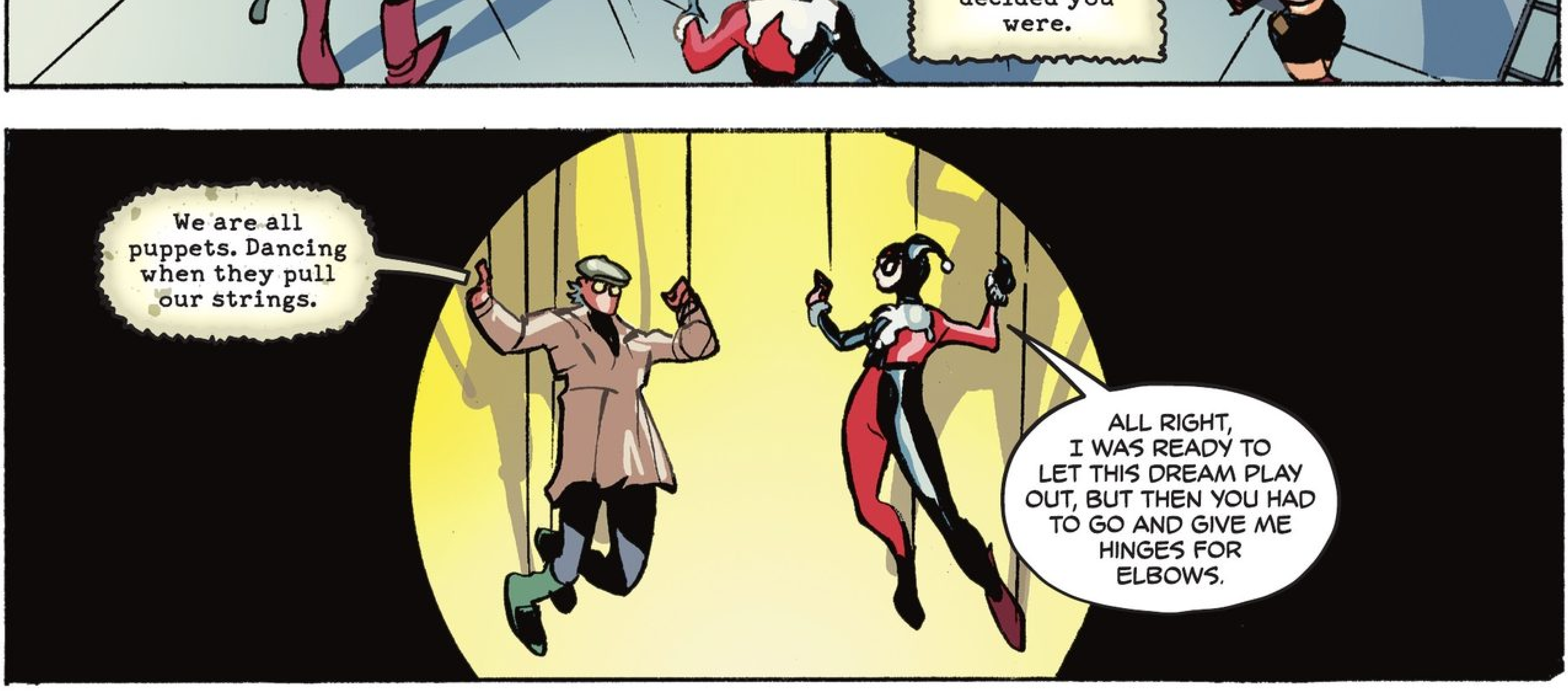

Here is where your story begins. As more fodder for the Batman's constant need for conflict.
NO WAY, PAL. I WASN'T BORN IN A CLOWN SUIT.
BANK OF GOTHAM
Weren't you? Have you ever been more than another supporting player in the overriding fiction of Gotham?
An entire city dedicated to serving as the platform for the exploits of one private citizen's personal narrative?
What other community would allow a self-appointed vigilante to make himself their single organizing principle?
SHOPO
LET'S SEE... METROPOLIS, COAST CITY, CENTRAL CITY, WHEREVER WONDER WOMAN LIVES, WHEREVER DETECTIVE CHIMP LIVES...
"Recognize that you've never fully escaped the Bat's gravity. Because you've never been allowed to."
BUT I *HAD* A LIFE BEFORE BEIN' A BAT-BADDIE! I WAS BORN IN BROOKLYN, I LIVED ON THROATCUTTER HILL!
AND NOW WE GET TO THE PUNCHIN' PART OF THIS DREAM!
First, tell me, before you "returned" to Throatcutter Hill, had you ever mentioned its name? Had you ever even thought about it?
WELL... NO.

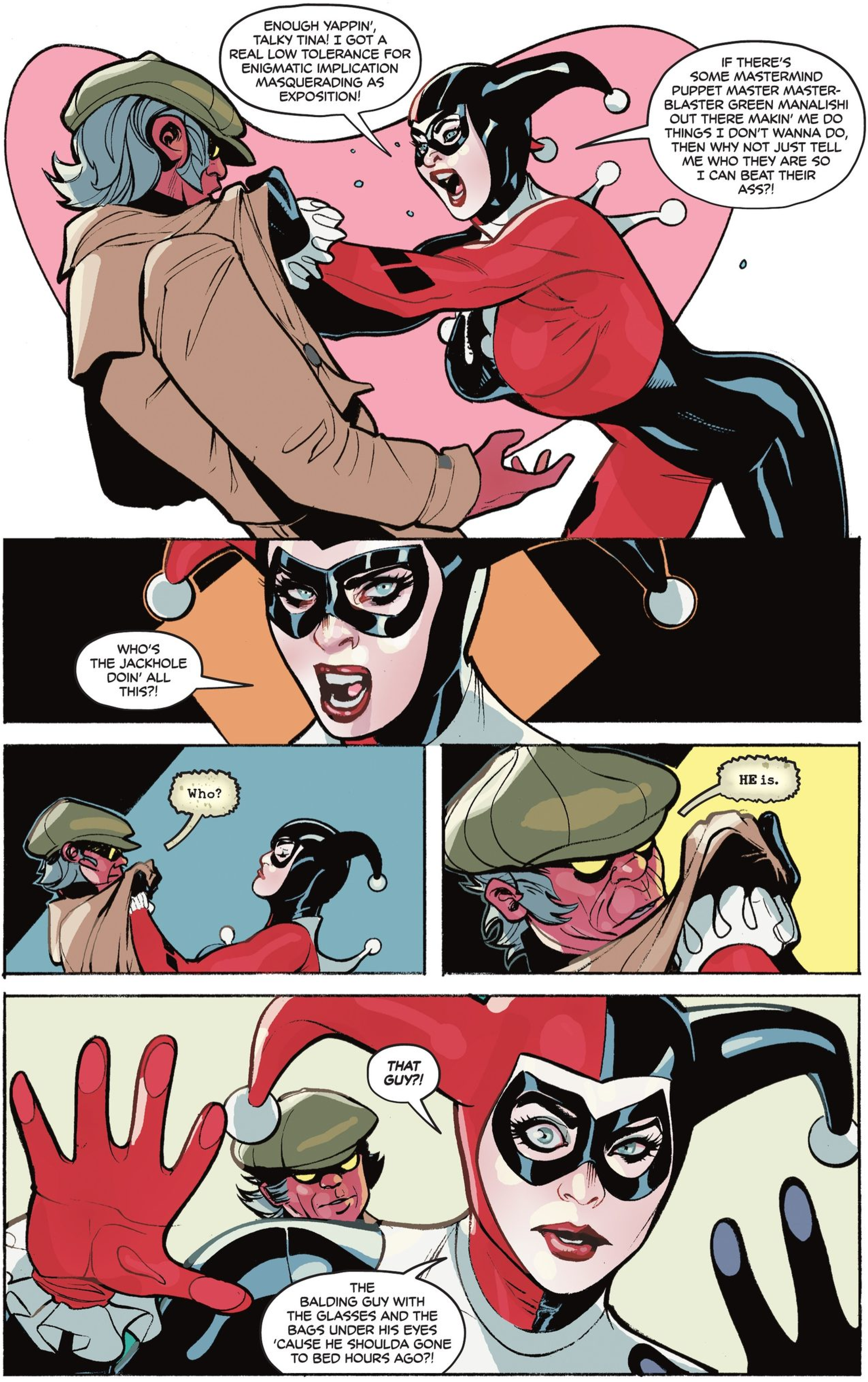

"Because you **HADN'T** lived in Throatcutter Hill.
"Until you had.
"You didn't have a backstory until **THEY** decided to make you part of the front story."
WHO DECIDED?
"The same people who decided to put you in this cell.
"The cell Harleen Quinzel walked into...
"...only for Harley Quinn to walk out."

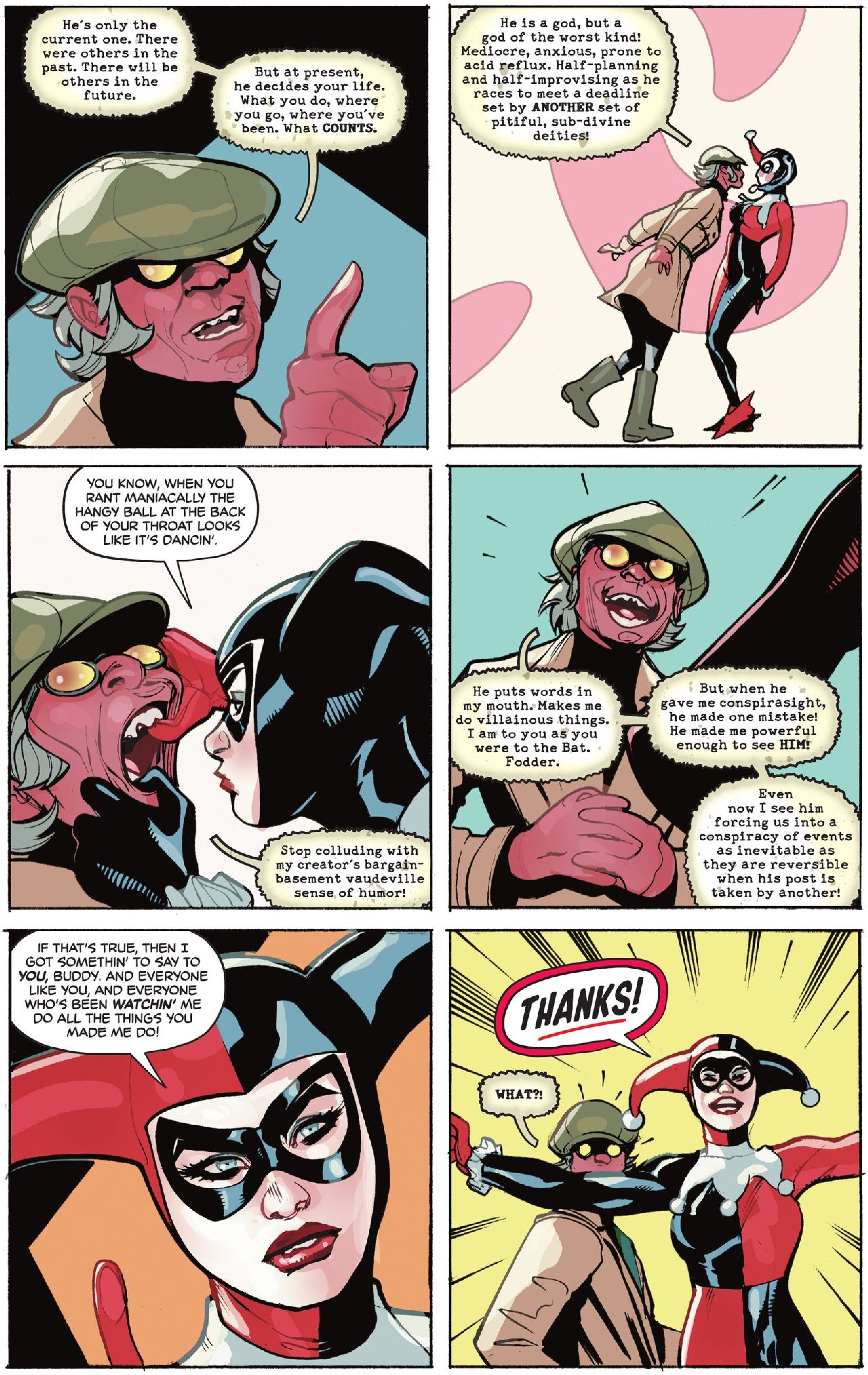

OKAY, THIS JUST STOPPED BEIN' FUNNY.
It never was, Harley.
REALLY? NOT EVEN THE PART WITH THE MACHINES COVERIN' MY HOO-HA?

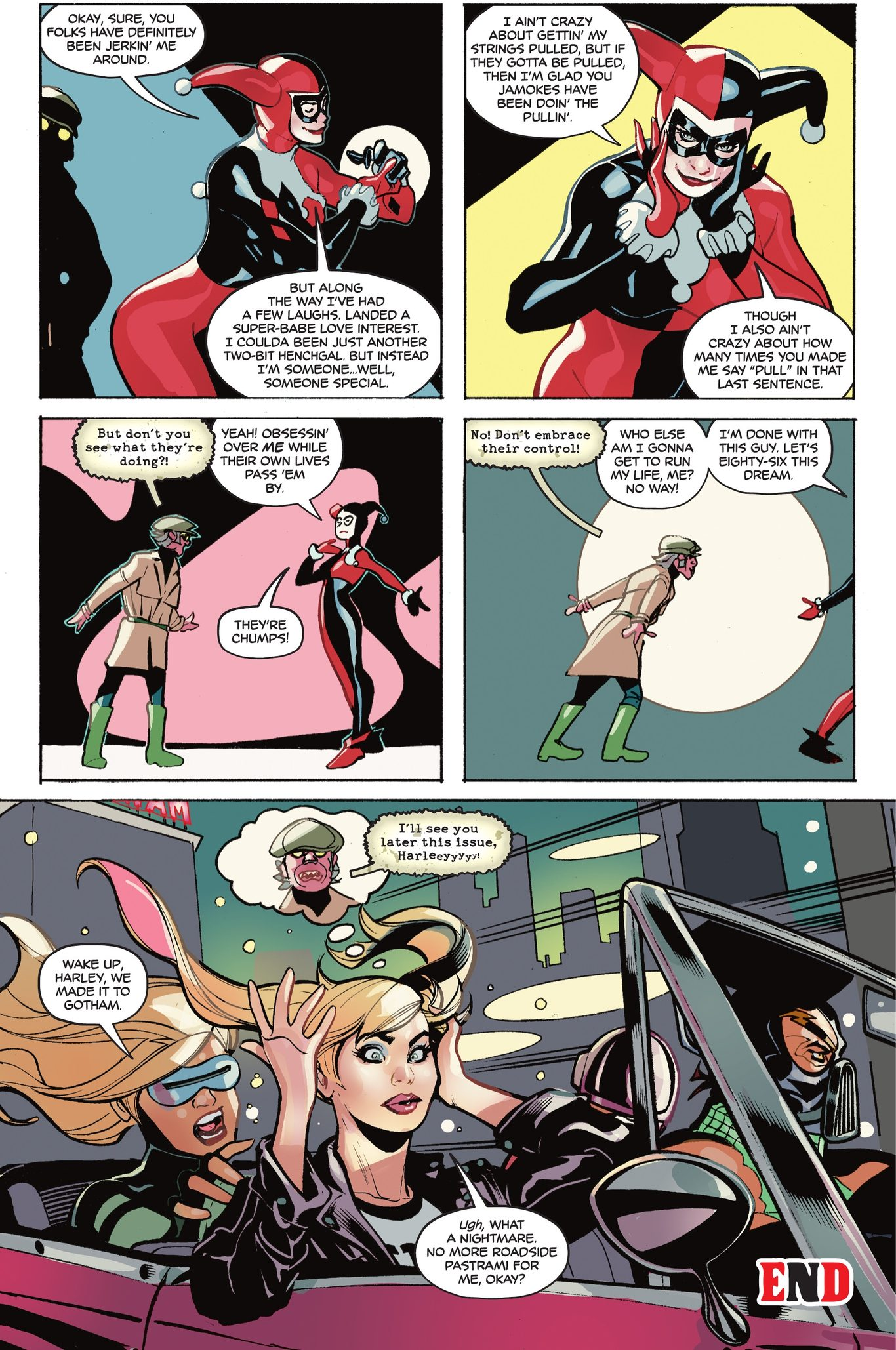

BUT YOU'RE SAYIN' SOMEONE SET ME UP. CRACKED MY LIFE.
I'm saying someone has set **ALL** of us up.
A predetermined storyline has been forced on us. And robbed us of our free will.

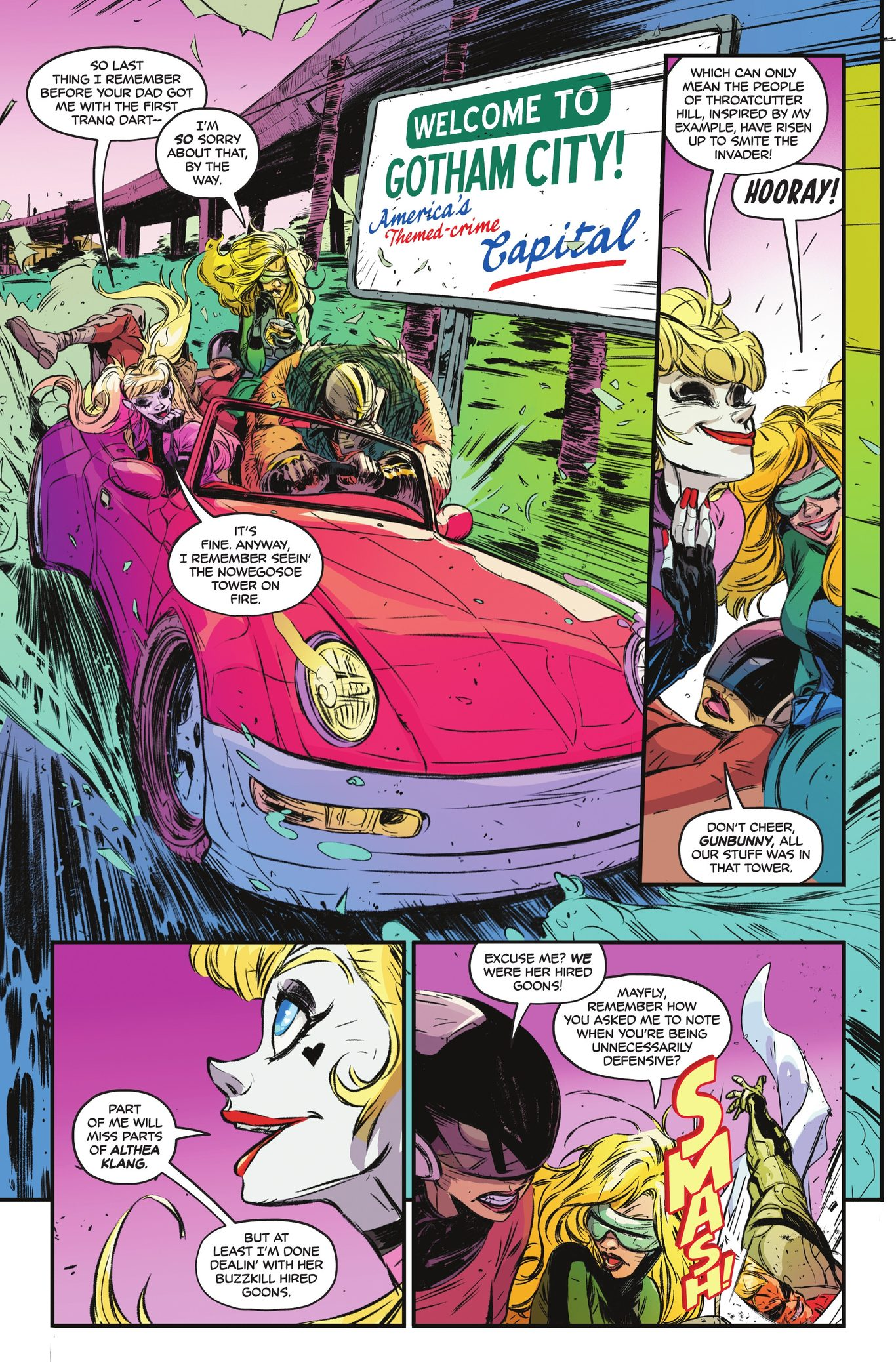

"For you, the storyline was that cell and a resulting life of villainy and emotional sloppiness.
"They needed you to be Harley Quinn.
"So they bent every path your life might take, so that **ALL** would lead to you becoming who they'd already decided you were.

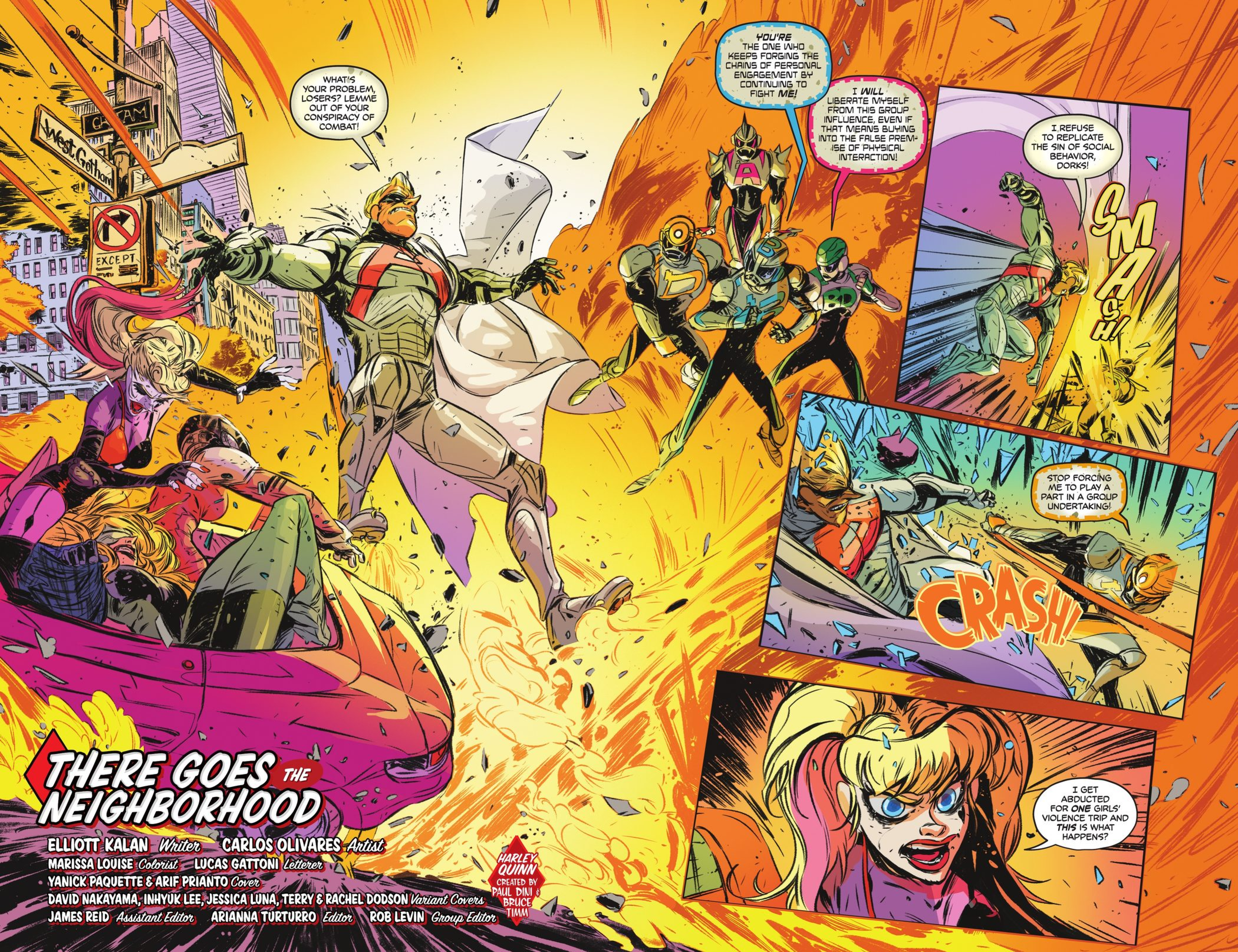

We are all puppets. Dancing when they pull our strings.
ALL RIGHT, I WAS READY TO LET THIS DREAM PLAY OUT, BUT THEN YOU HAD TO GO AND GIVE ME HINGES FOR ELBOWS.


ENOUGH YAPPIN', TALKY TINA! I GOT A REAL LOW TOLERANCE FOR ENIGMATIC IMPLICATION MASQUERADING AS EXPOSITION!
IF THERE'S SOME MASTERMIND PUPPET MASTER MASTER-BLASTER GREEN MANALISHI OUT THERE MAKIN' ME DO THINGS I DON'T WANNA DO, THEN WHY NOT JUST TELL ME WHO THEY ARE SO I CAN BEAT THEIR ASS?!
WHO'S THE JACKHOLE DOIN' ALL THIS?!
Who?
HE is.
THAT GUY?!
THE BALDING GUY WITH THE GLASSES AND THE BAGS UNDER HIS EYES 'CAUSE HE SHOULDA GONE TO BED HOURS AGO?!


He's only the current one. There were others in the past. There will be others in the future.
But at present, he decides your life. What you do, where you go, where you've been. What **COUNTS.**
He is a god, but a god of the worst kind! Mediocre, anxious, prone to acid reflux. Half-planning and half-improvising as he races to meet a deadline set by **ANOTHER** set of pitiful, sub-divine deities!
YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU RANT MANIACALLY THE HANGY BALL AT THE BACK OF YOUR THROAT LOOKS LIKE IT'S DANCIN'.
Stop colluding with my creator's bargain-basement vaudeville sense of humor!
He puts words in my mouth. Makes me do villainous things. I am to you as you were to the Bat. Fodder.
But when he gave me conspirasight, he made one mistake! He made me powerful enough to see **HIM!**
Even now I see him forcing us into a conspiracy of events as inevitable as they are reversible when his post is taken by another!
IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN I GOT SOMETHIN' TO SAY TO ***YOU,*** BUDDY. AND EVERYONE LIKE YOU, AND EVERYONE WHO'S BEEN ***WATCHIN'*** ME DO ALL THE THINGS YOU MADE ME DO!
THANKS!
WHAT?!


OKAY, SURE, YOU FOLKS HAVE DEFINITELY BEEN JERKIN' ME AROUND.
BUT ALONG THE WAY I'VE HAD A FEW LAUGHS. LANDED A SUPER-BABE LOVE INTEREST. I COULDA BEEN JUST ANOTHER TWO-BIT HENCHGAL. BUT INSTEAD I'M SOMEONE...WELL, SOMEONE SPECIAL.
I AIN'T CRAZY ABOUT GETTIN' MY STRINGS PULLED, BUT IF THEY GOTTA BE PULLED, THEN I'M GLAD YOU JAMOKES HAVE BEEN DOIN' THE PULLIN'.
THOUGH I ALSO AIN'T CRAZY ABOUT HOW MANY TIMES YOU MADE ME SAY "PULL" IN THAT LAST SENTENCE.
But don't you see what they're doing?!
YEAH! OBSESSIN' OVER *ME* WHILE THEIR OWN LIVES PASS 'EM BY.
THEY'RE CHUMPS!
No! Don't embrace their control!
WHO ELSE AM I GONNA GET TO RUN MY LIFE, ME? NO WAY!
I'M DONE WITH THIS GUY. LET'S EIGHTY-SIX THIS DREAM.
I'll see you later this issue, Harleeyyyyy!
WAKE UP, HARLEY, WE MADE IT TO GOTHAM.
Ugh, WHAT A NIGHTMARE. NO MORE ROADSIDE PASTRAMI FOR ME, OKAY?
END


SO LAST THING I REMEMBER BEFORE YOUR DAD GOT ME WITH THE FIRST TRANQ DART--
I'M **SO** SORRY ABOUT THAT, BY THE WAY.
WELCOME TO GOTHAM CITY! America's Themed-crime Capital
IT'S FINE. ANYWAY, I REMEMBER SEEIN' THE NOWEGOSOE TOWER ON FIRE.
WHICH CAN ONLY MEAN THE PEOPLE OF THROATCUTTER HILL, INSPIRED BY MY EXAMPLE, HAVE RISEN UP TO SMITE THE INVADER!
HOORAY!
DON'T CHEER, ***GUNBUNNY,*** ALL OUR STUFF WAS IN THAT TOWER.
PART OF ME WILL MISS PARTS OF ***ALTHEA KLANG.***
BUT AT LEAST I'M DONE DEALIN' WITH HER BUZZKILL HIRED GOONS.
EXCUSE ME? ***WE*** WERE HER HIRED GOONS!
MAYFLY, REMEMBER HOW YOU ASKED ME TO NOTE WHEN YOU'RE BEING UNNECESSARILY DEFENSIVE?
SMASH!


West Gotham
EXCEPT
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, LOSERS? LEMME OUT OF YOUR CONSPIRACY OF COMBAT!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO KEEPS FORGING THE CHAINS OF PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT BY CONTINUING TO FIGHT *ME!*
I *WILL* LIBERATE MYSELF FROM THIS GROUP INFLUENCE, EVEN IF THAT MEANS BUYING INTO THE FALSE PREMISE OF PHYSICAL INTERACTION!
I REFUSE TO REPLICATE THE SIN OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR, DORKS!
SMASH!
STOP FORCING ME TO PLAY A PART IN A GROUP UNDERTAKING!
CRASH!
I GET ABDUCTED FOR *ONE* GIRLS' VIOLENCE TRIP AND *THIS* IS WHAT HAPPENS?

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

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MARISSA LOUISE *Colorist* **LUCAS GATTONI** *Letterer*
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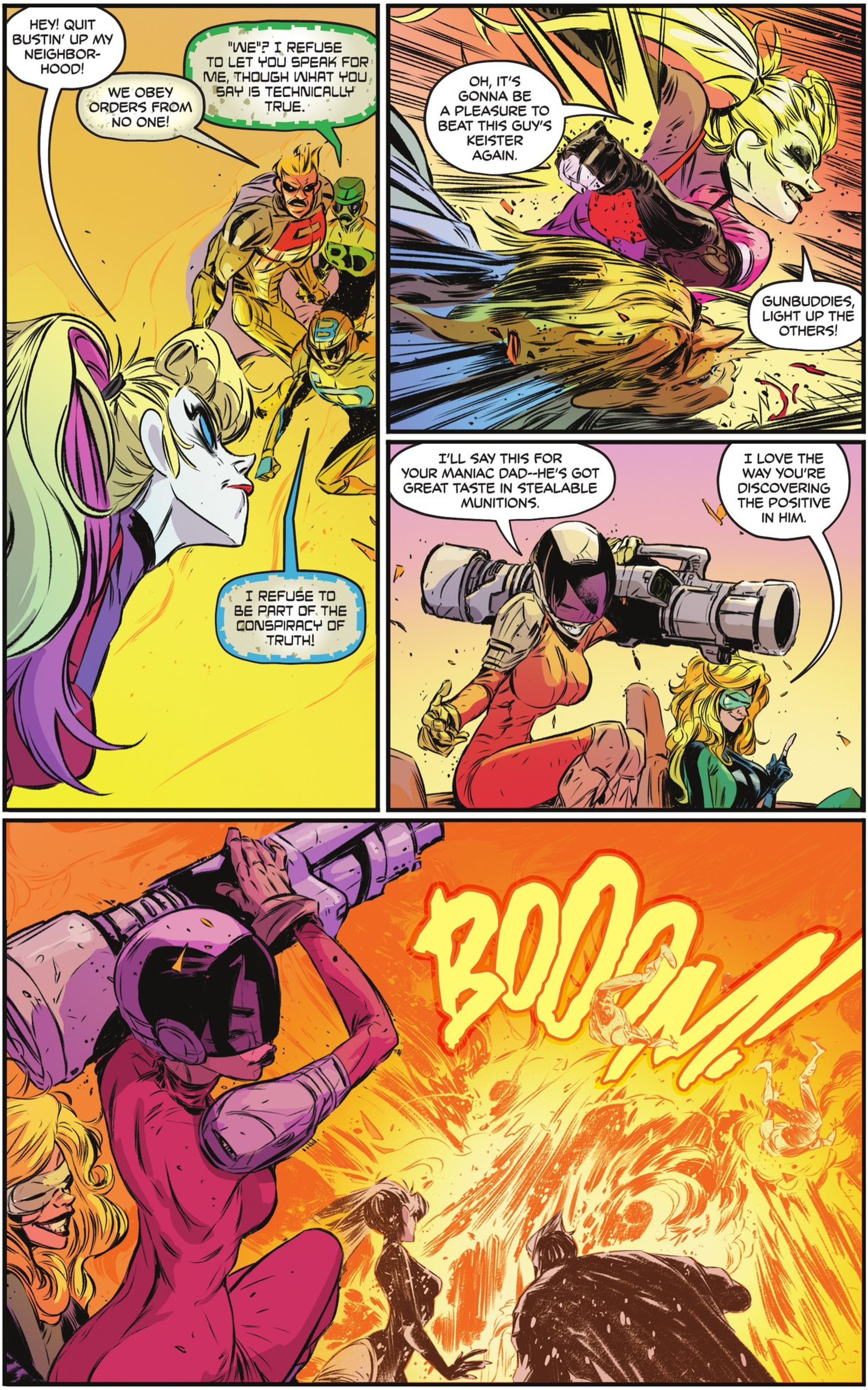
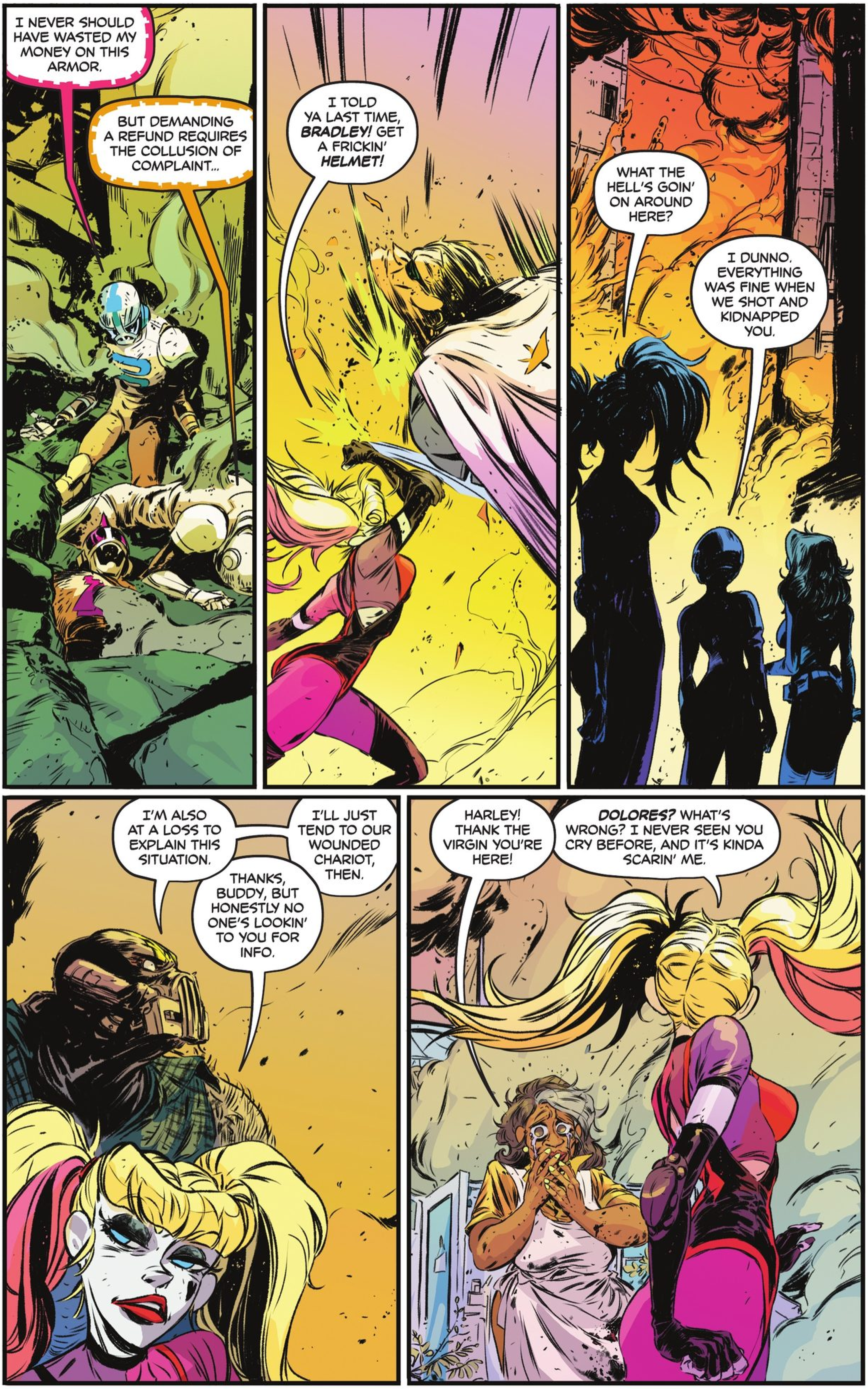
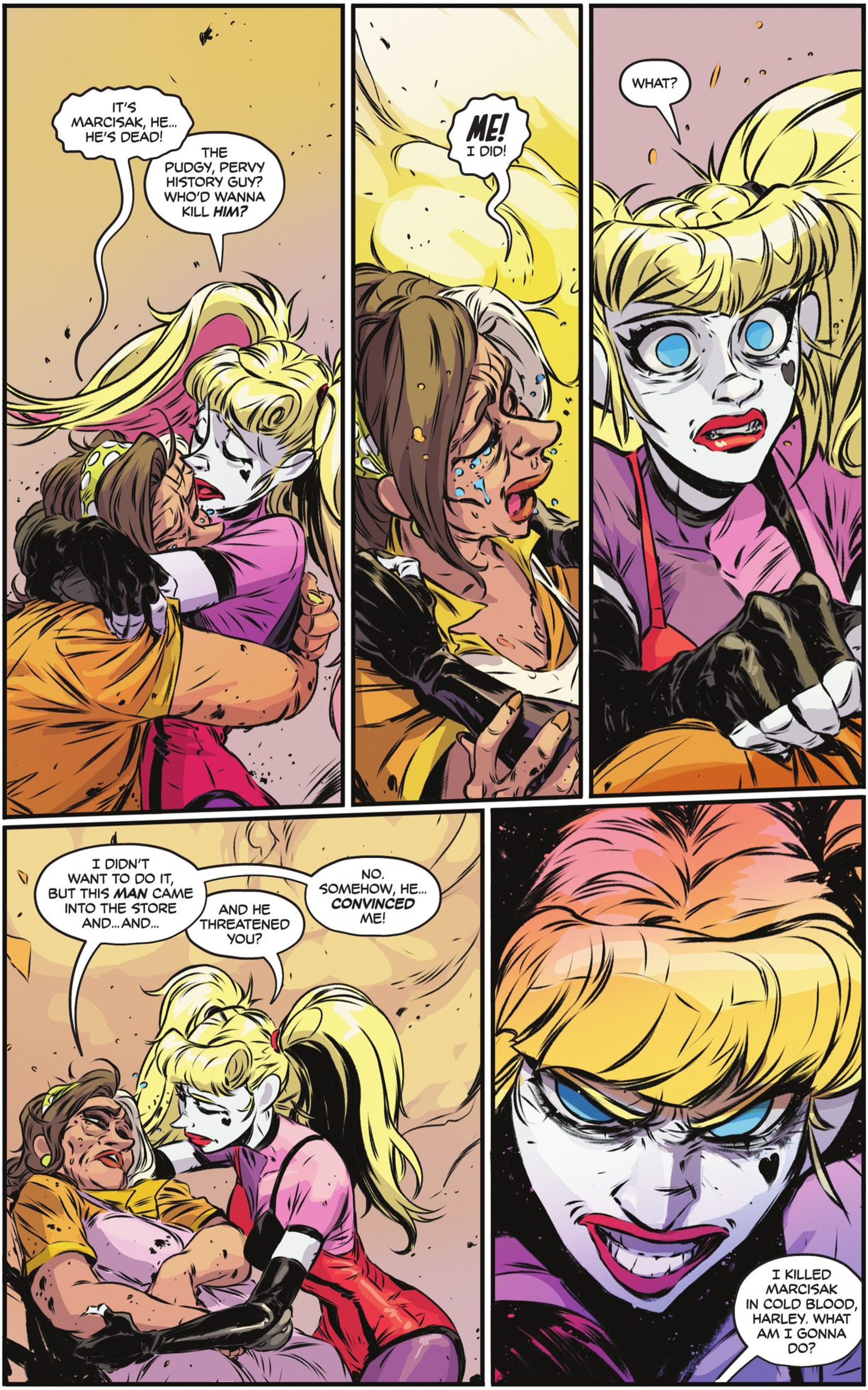
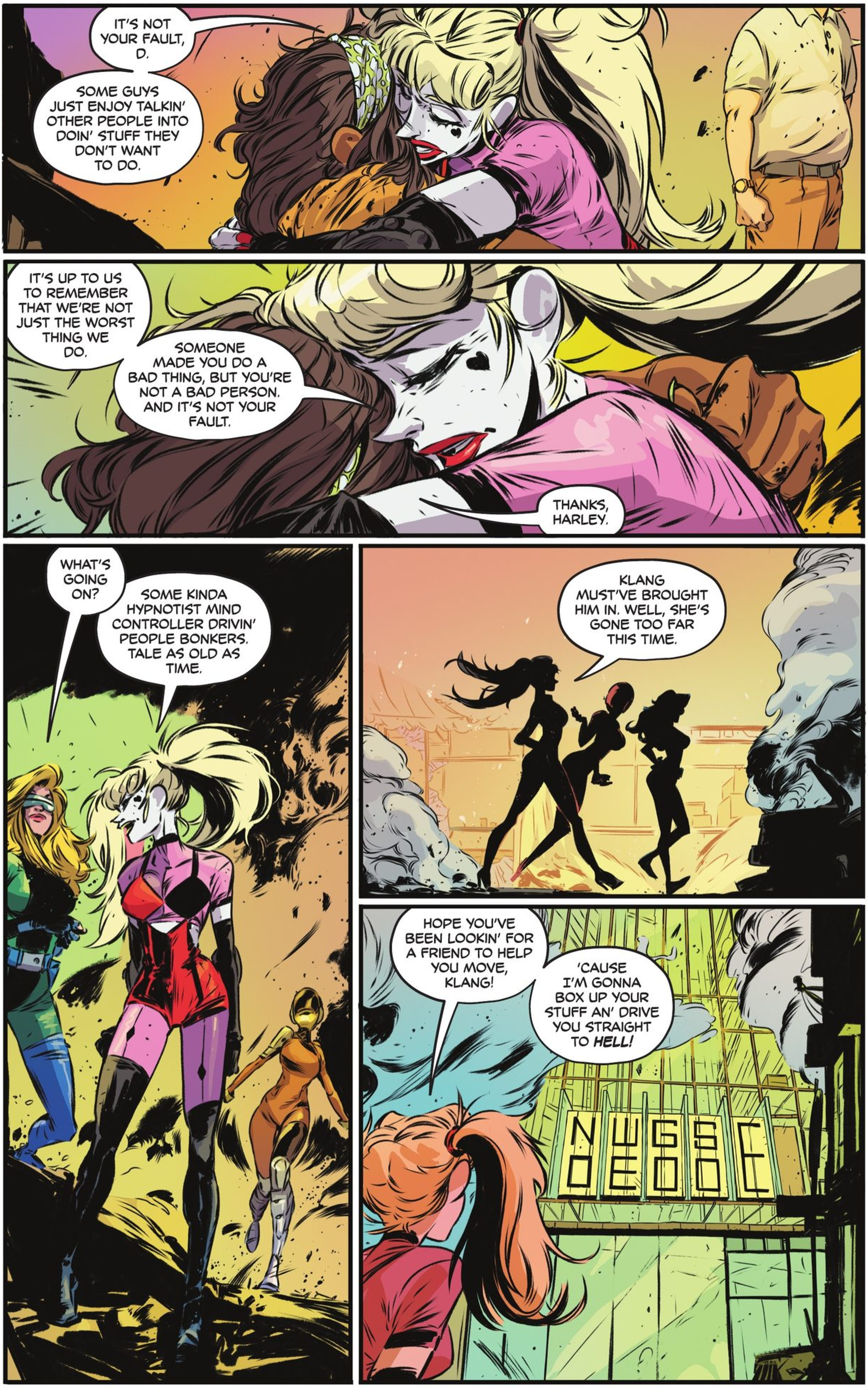
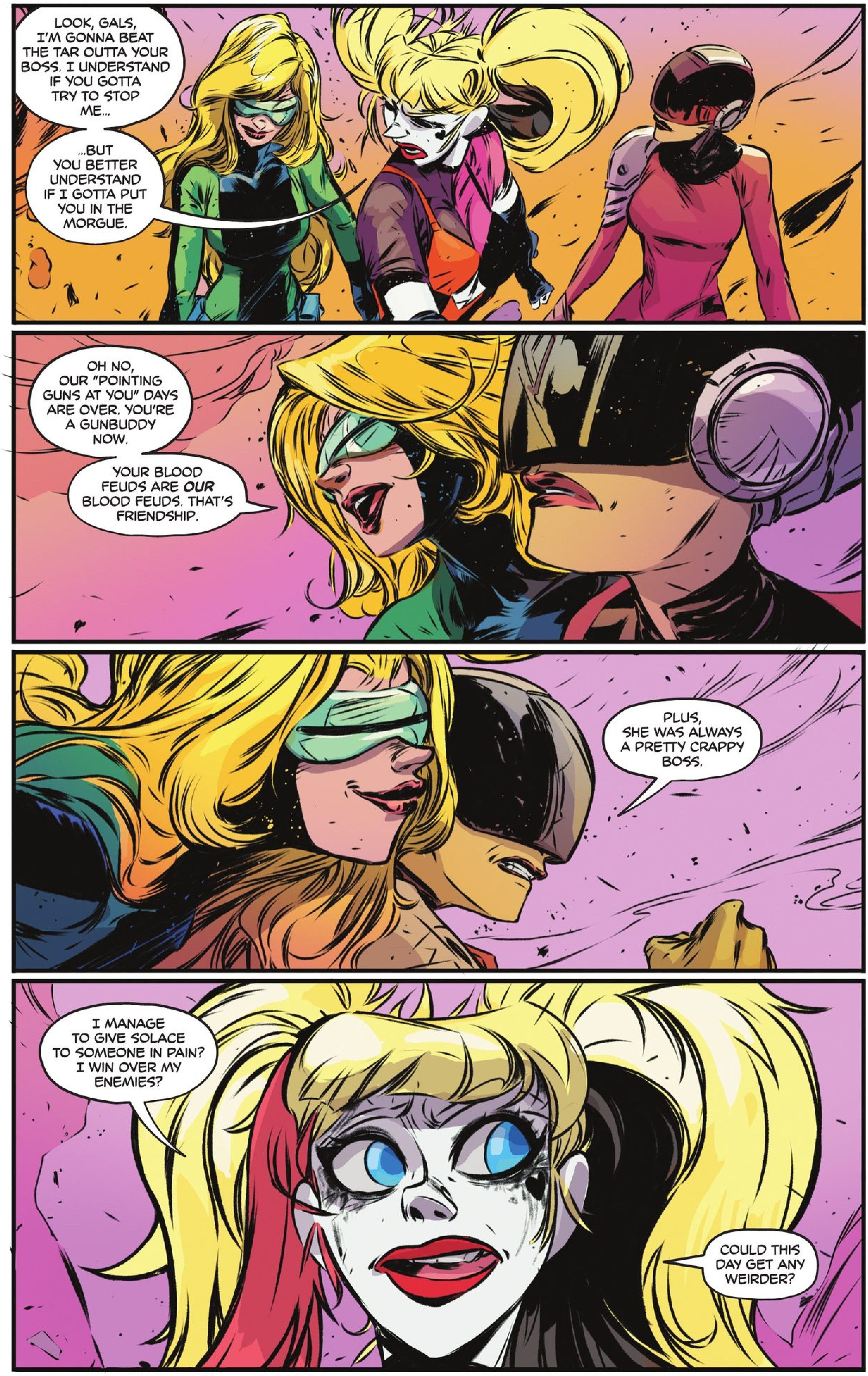
HARLEY QUINN CREATED BY PAUL DINI & BRUCE TIMM

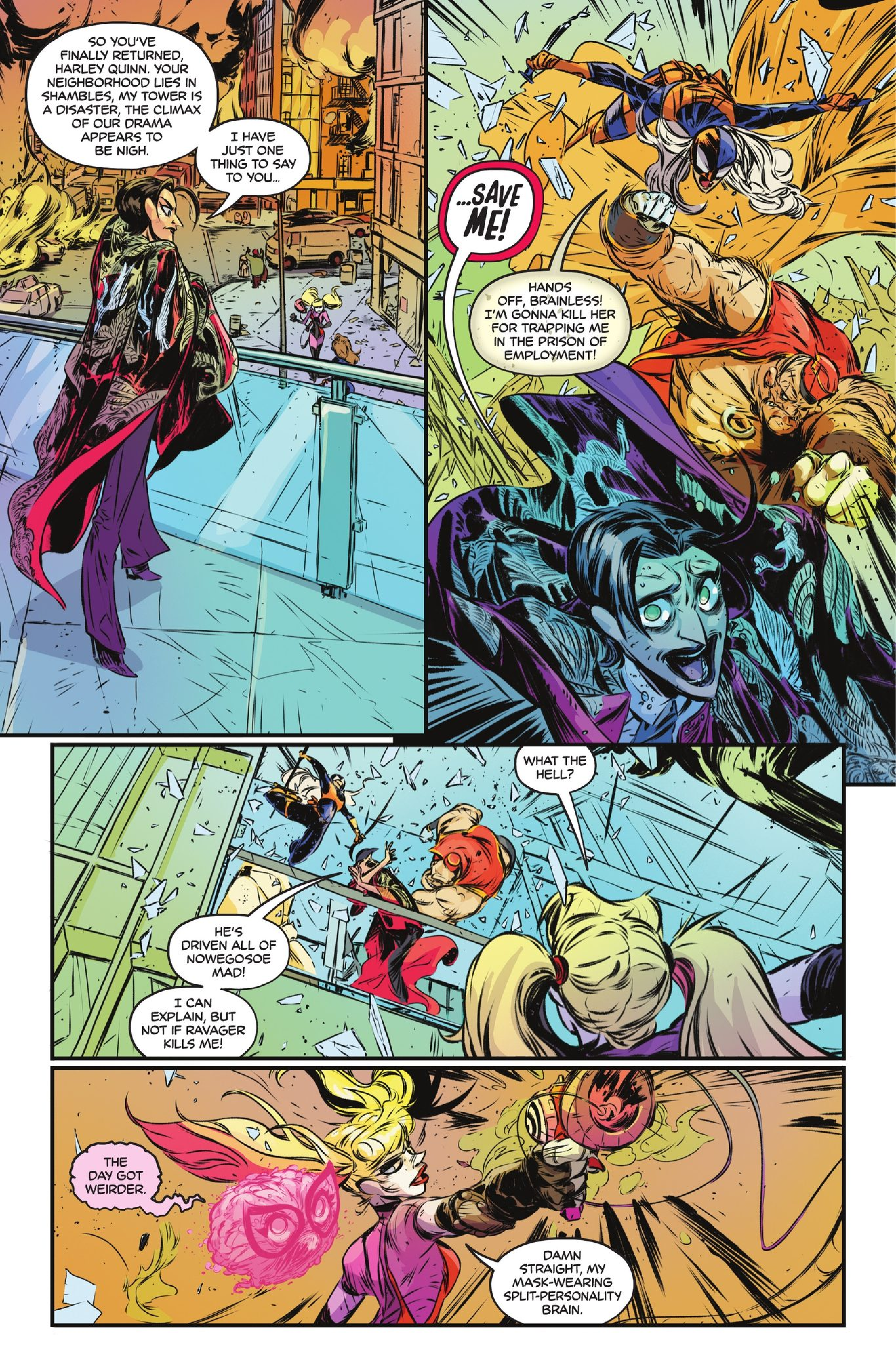

HEY! QUIT BUSTIN' UP MY NEIGHBORHOOD!
WE OBEY ORDERS FROM NO ONE!
"WE"? I REFUSE TO LET YOU SPEAK FOR ME, THOUGH WHAT YOU SAY IS TECHNICALLY TRUE.
I REFUSE TO BE PART OF THE CONSPIRACY OF TRUTH!
OH, IT'S GONNA BE A PLEASURE TO BEAT THIS GUY'S KEISTER AGAIN.
GUNBUDDIES, LIGHT UP THE OTHERS!
I'LL SAY THIS FOR YOUR MANIAC DAD--HE'S GOT GREAT TASTE IN STEALABLE MUNITIONS.
I LOVE THE WAY YOU'RE DISCOVERING THE POSITIVE IN HIM.
BOOOM!

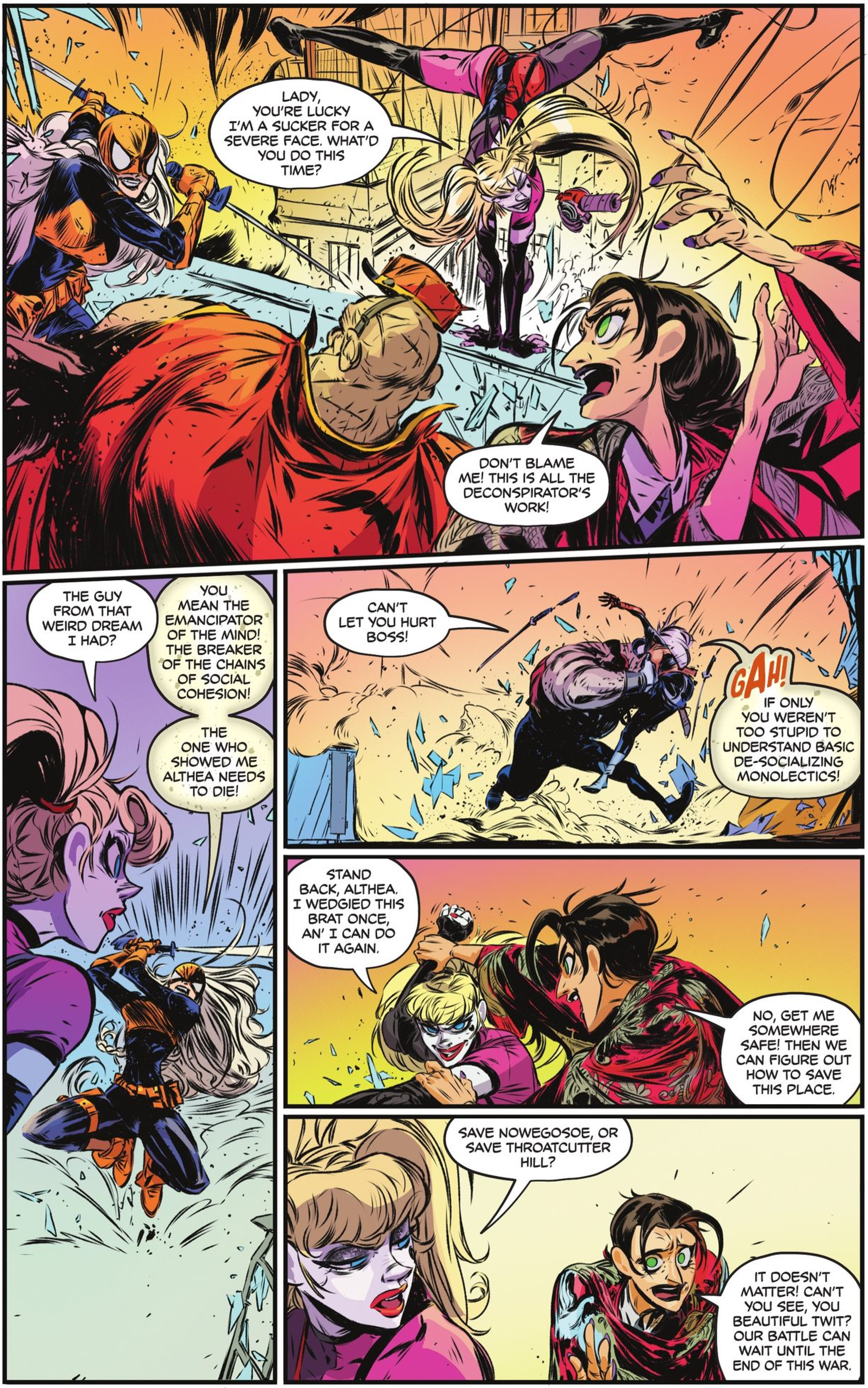

I NEVER SHOULD HAVE WASTED MY MONEY ON THIS ARMOR.
BUT DEMANDING A REFUND REQUIRES THE COLLUSION OF COMPLAINT...
I TOLD YA LAST TIME, *BRADLEY!* GET A FRICKIN' *HELMET!*
WHAT THE HELL'S GOIN' ON AROUND HERE?
I DUNNO. EVERYTHING WAS FINE WHEN WE SHOT AND KIDNAPPED YOU.
I'M ALSO AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN THIS SITUATION.
I'LL JUST TEND TO OUR WOUNDED CHARIOT, THEN.
THANKS, BUDDY, BUT HONESTLY NO ONE'S LOOKIN' TO YOU FOR INFO.
HARLEY! THANK THE VIRGIN YOU'RE HERE!
DOLORES? WHAT'S WRONG? I NEVER SEEN YOU CRY BEFORE, AND IT'S KINDA SCARIN' ME.

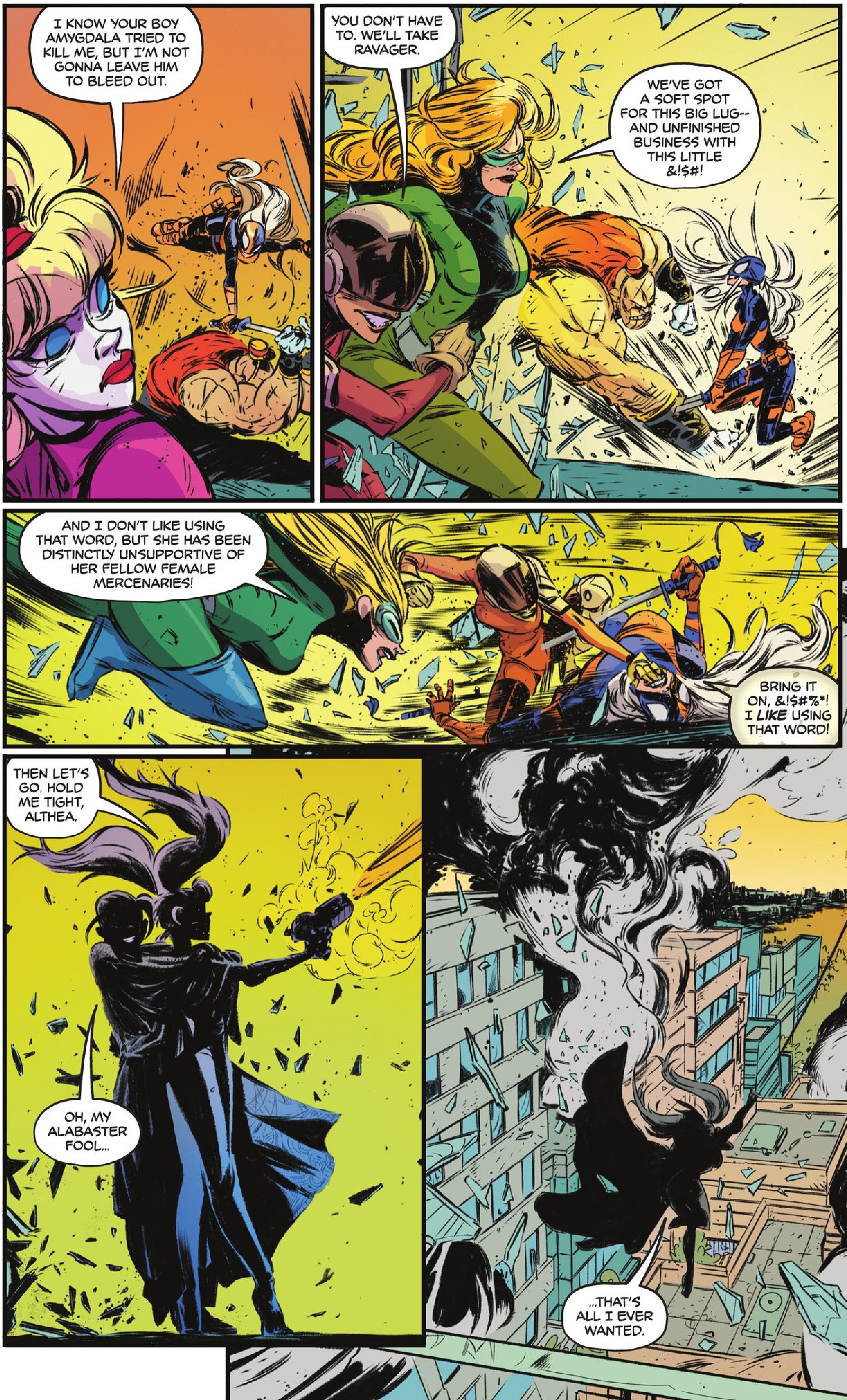

IT'S MARCISAK, HE... HE'S DEAD!
THE PUDGY, PERVY HISTORY GUY? WHO'D WANNA KILL HIM?
ME! I DID!
WHAT?
I DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT, BUT THIS MAN CAME INTO THE STORE AND...AND...
AND HE THREATENED YOU?
NO. SOMEHOW, HE... CONVINCED ME!
I KILLED MARCISAK IN COLD BLOOD, HARLEY. WHAT AM I GONNA DO?

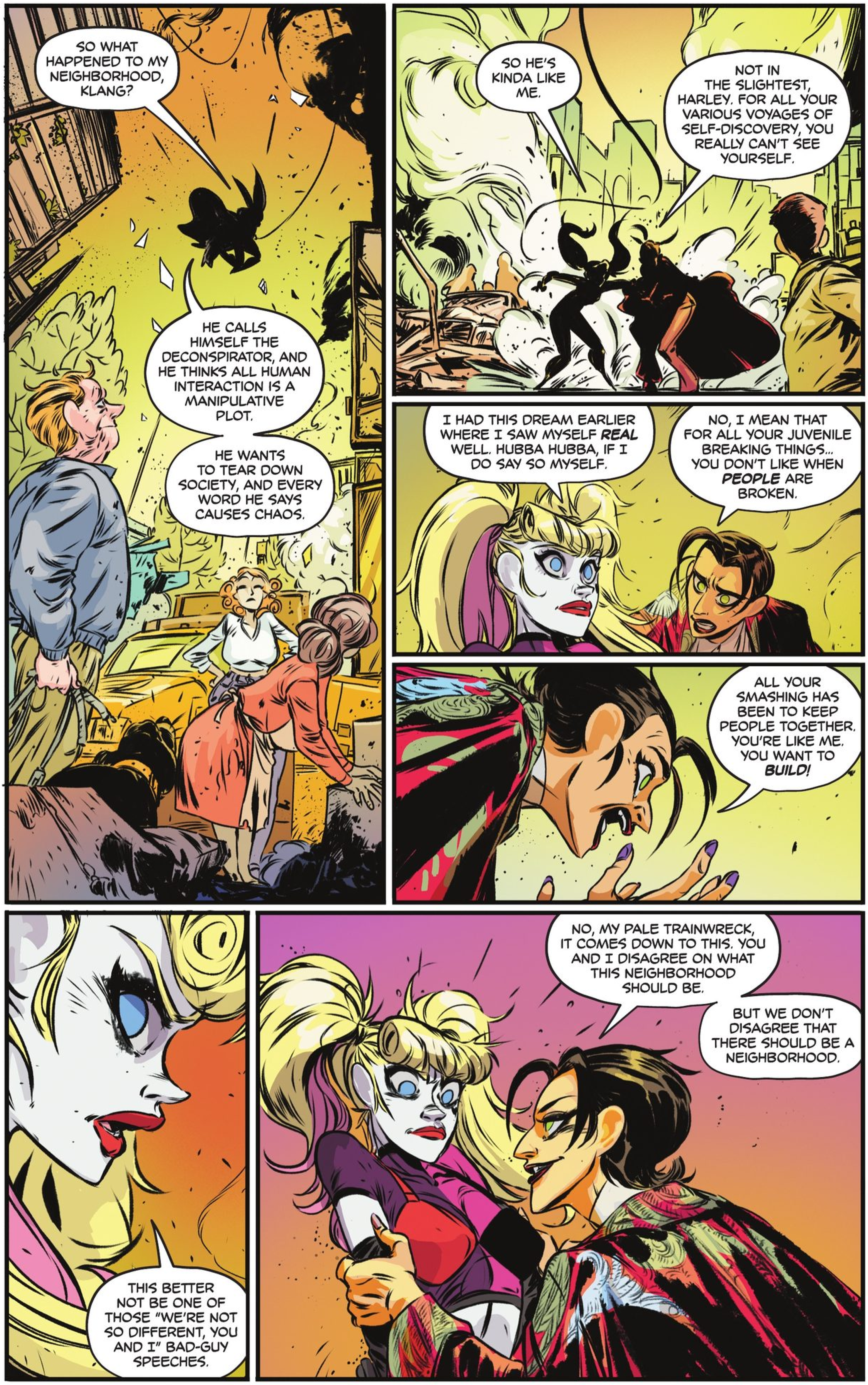

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, D.
SOME GUYS JUST ENJOY TALKIN' OTHER PEOPLE INTO DOIN' STUFF THEY DON'T WANT TO DO.
IT'S UP TO US TO REMEMBER THAT WE'RE NOT JUST THE WORST THING WE DO.
SOMEONE MADE YOU DO A BAD THING, BUT YOU'RE NOT A BAD PERSON. AND IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
THANKS, HARLEY.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
SOME KINDA HYPNOTIST MIND CONTROLLER DRIVIN' PEOPLE BONKERS. TALE AS OLD AS TIME.
KLANG MUST'VE BROUGHT HIM IN. WELL, SHE'S GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME.
HOPE YOU'VE BEEN LOOKIN' FOR A FRIEND TO HELP YOU MOVE, KLANG!
'CAUSE I'M GONNA BOX UP YOUR STUFF AN' DRIVE YOU STRAIGHT TO ***HELL!***

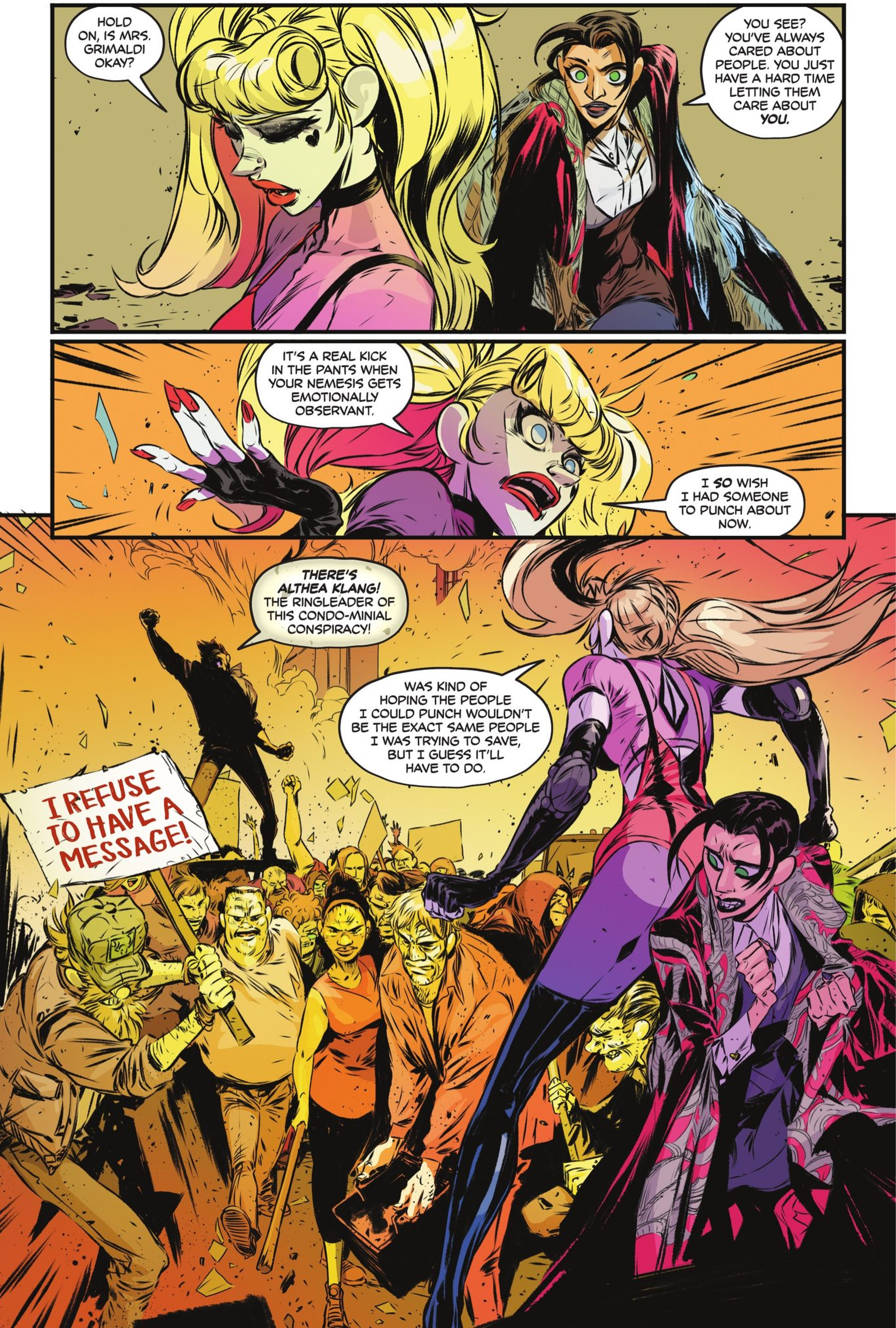

LOOK, GALS, I'M GONNA BEAT THE TAR OUTTA YOUR BOSS. I UNDERSTAND IF YOU GOTTA TRY TO STOP ME...
...BUT YOU BETTER UNDERSTAND IF I GOTTA PUT YOU IN THE MORGUE.
OH NO, OUR "POINTING GUNS AT YOU" DAYS ARE OVER. YOU'RE A GUNBUDDY NOW.
YOUR BLOOD FEUDS ARE ***OUR*** BLOOD FEUDS. THAT'S FRIENDSHIP.
PLUS, SHE WAS ALWAYS A PRETTY CRAPPY BOSS.
I MANAGE TO GIVE SOLACE TO SOMEONE IN PAIN? I WIN OVER MY ENEMIES?
COULD THIS DAY GET ANY WEIRDER?

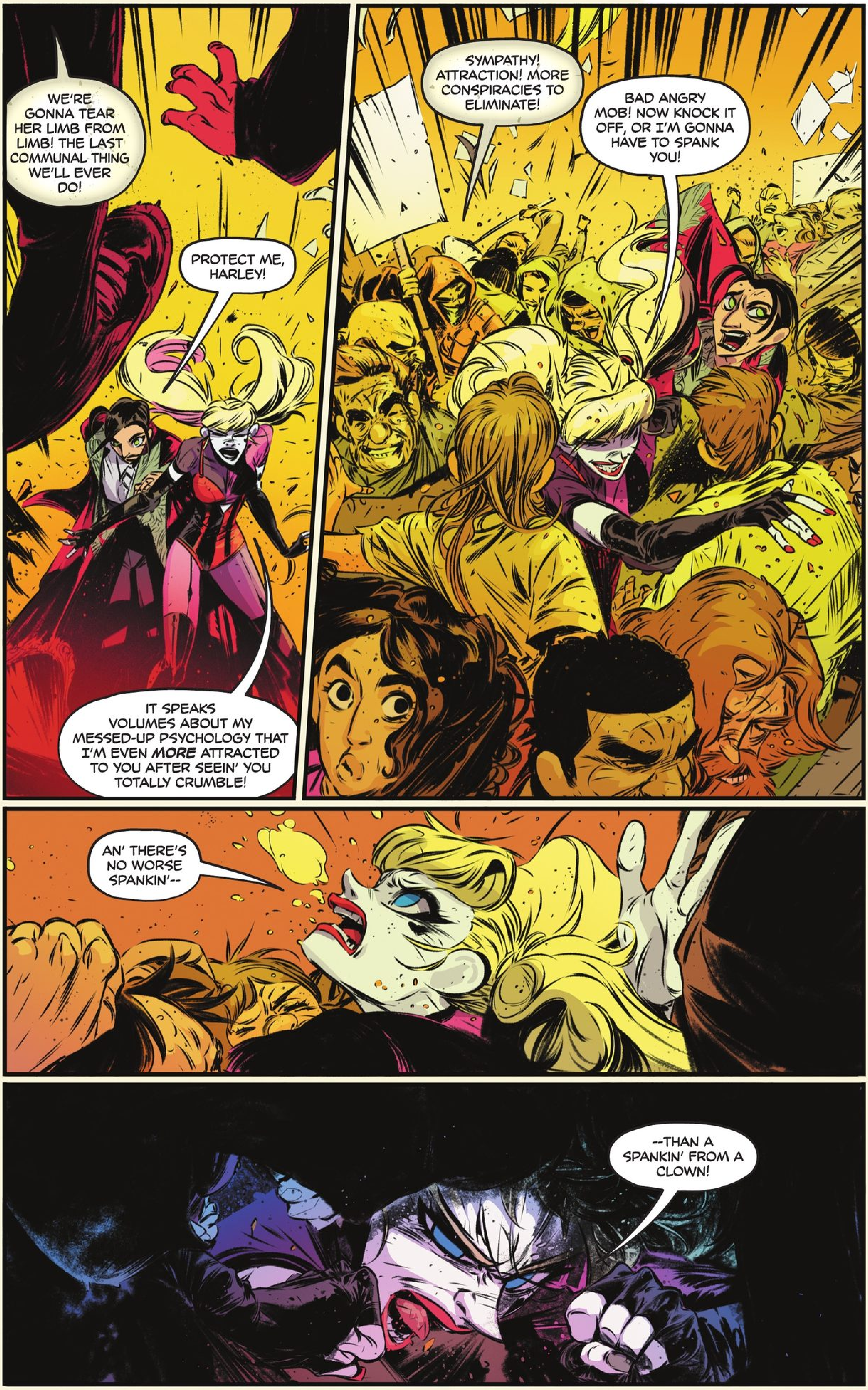

SO YOU'VE FINALLY RETURNED, HARLEY QUINN. YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD LIES IN SHAMBLES, MY TOWER IS A DISASTER, THE CLIMAX OF OUR DRAMA APPEARS TO BE NIGH.
I HAVE JUST ONE THING TO SAY TO YOU...
...SAVE ME!
HANDS OFF, BRAINLESS! I'M GONNA KILL HER FOR TRAPPING ME IN THE PRISON OF EMPLOYMENT!
WHAT THE HELL?
HE'S DRIVEN ALL OF NOWEGOSOE MAD!
I CAN EXPLAIN, BUT NOT IF RAVAGER KILLS ME!
THE DAY GOT WEIRDER.
DAMN STRAIGHT, MY MASK-WEARING SPLIT-PERSONALITY BRAIN.

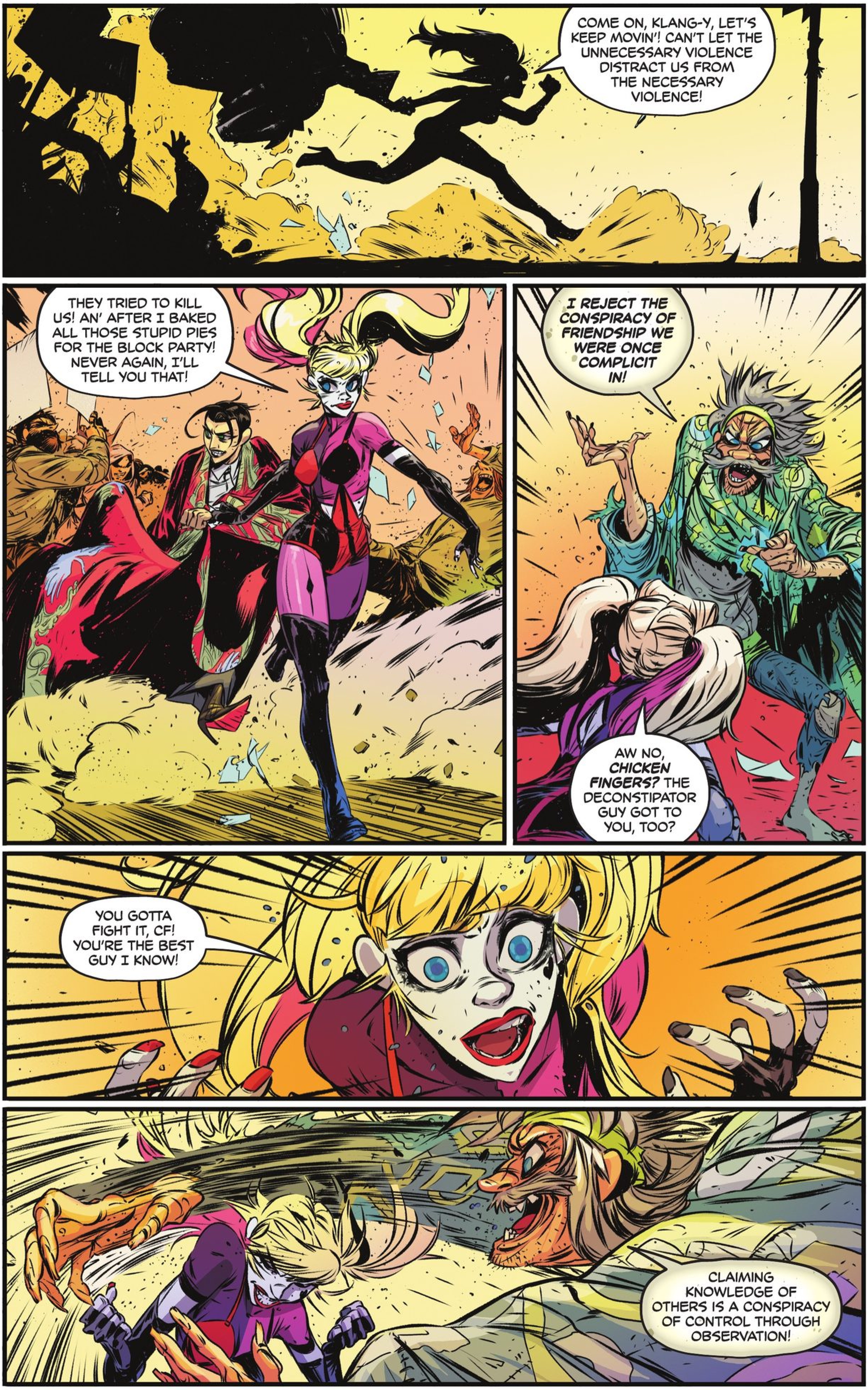

LADY, YOU'RE LUCKY I'M A SUCKER FOR A SEVERE FACE. WHAT'D YOU DO THIS TIME?
DON'T BLAME ME! THIS IS ALL THE DECONSPIRATOR'S WORK!
THE GUY FROM THAT WEIRD DREAM I HAD?
YOU MEAN THE EMANCIPATOR OF THE MIND! THE BREAKER OF THE CHAINS OF SOCIAL COHESION!
THE ONE WHO SHOWED ME ALTHEA NEEDS TO DIE!
CAN'T LET YOU HURT BOSS!
GAH!
IF ONLY YOU WEREN'T TOO STUPID TO UNDERSTAND BASIC DE-SOCIALIZING MONOLECTICS!
STAND BACK, ALTHEA. I WEDGIED THIS BRAT ONCE, AN' I CAN DO IT AGAIN.
NO, GET ME SOMEWHERE SAFE! THEN WE CAN FIGURE OUT HOW TO SAVE THIS PLACE.
SAVE NOWEGOSOE, OR SAVE THROATCUTTER HILL?
IT DOESN'T MATTER! CAN'T YOU SEE, YOU BEAUTIFUL TWIT? OUR BATTLE CAN WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THIS WAR.

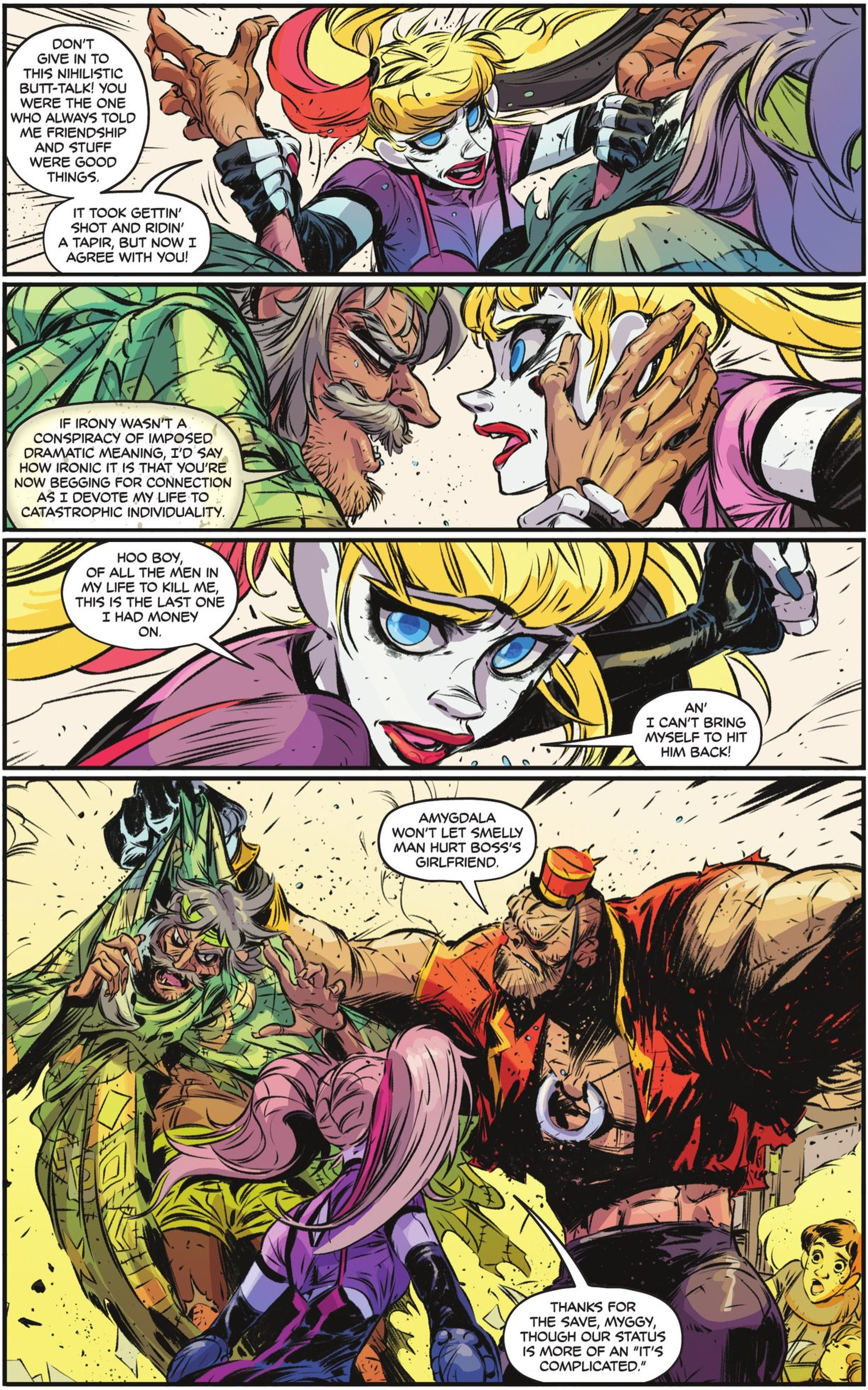

I KNOW YOUR BOY AMYGDALA TRIED TO KILL ME, BUT I'M NOT GONNA LEAVE HIM TO BLEED OUT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO. WE'LL TAKE RAVAGER.
WE'VE GOT A SOFT SPOT FOR THIS BIG LUG-- AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS WITH THIS LITTLE &!$#!
AND I DON'T LIKE USING THAT WORD, BUT SHE HAS BEEN DISTINCTLY UNSUPPORTIVE OF HER FELLOW FEMALE MERCENARIES!
BRING IT ON, &!$#%*! I LIKE USING THAT WORD!
THEN LET'S GO. HOLD ME TIGHT, ALTHEA.
OH, MY ALABASTER FOOL...
...THAT'S ALL I EVER WANTED.

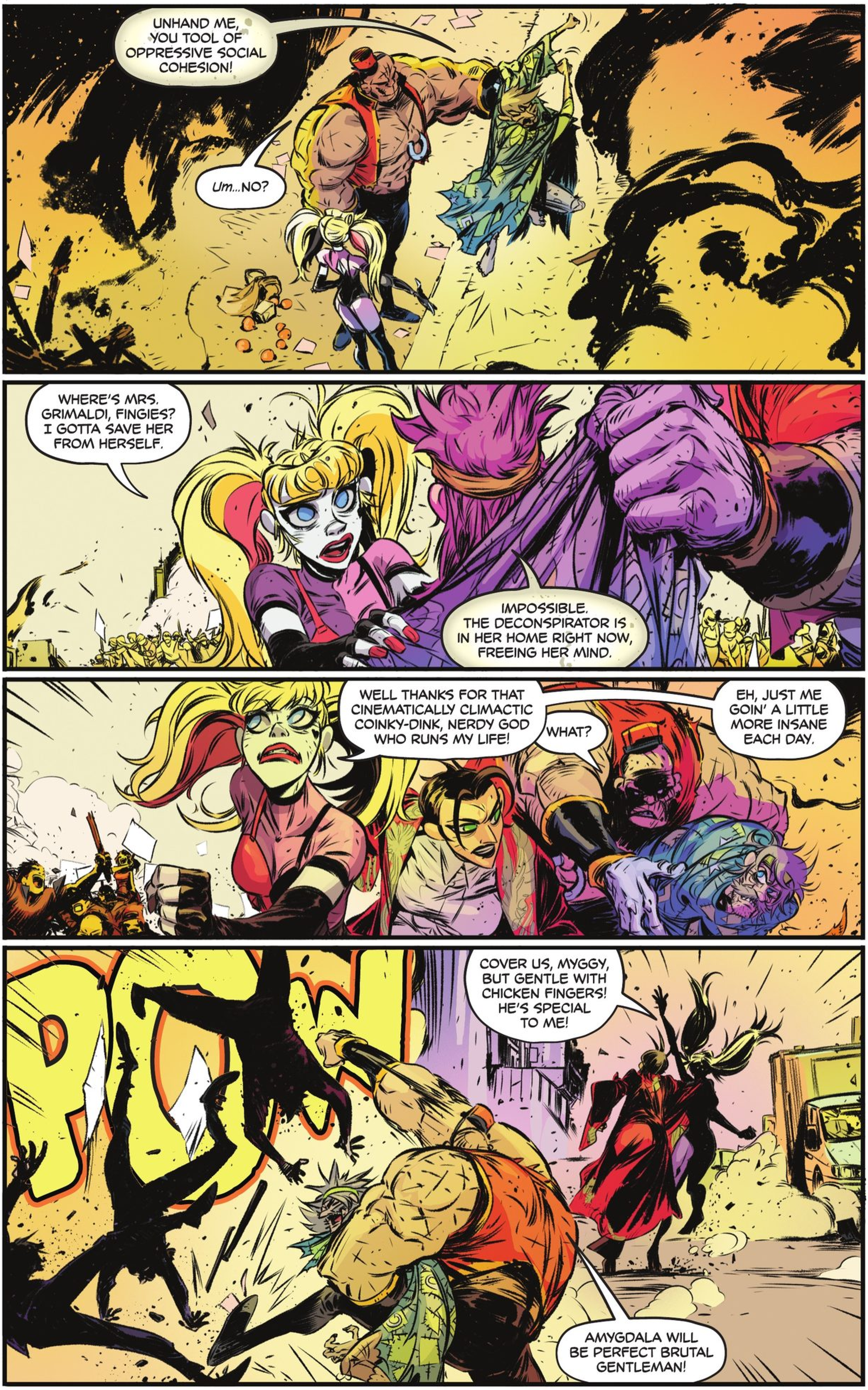

SO WHAT HAPPENED TO MY NEIGHBORHOOD, KLANG?
HE CALLS HIMSELF THE DECONSPIRATOR, AND HE THINKS ALL HUMAN INTERACTION IS A MANIPULATIVE PLOT.
HE WANTS TO TEAR DOWN SOCIETY, AND EVERY WORD HE SAYS CAUSES CHAOS.
SO HE'S KINDA LIKE ME.
NOT IN THE SLIGHTEST, HARLEY. FOR ALL YOUR VARIOUS VOYAGES OF SELF-DISCOVERY, YOU REALLY CAN'T SEE YOURSELF.
I HAD THIS DREAM EARLIER WHERE I SAW MYSELF ***REAL*** WELL. HUBBA HUBBA, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.
NO, I MEAN THAT FOR ALL YOUR JUVENILE BREAKING THINGS... YOU DON'T LIKE WHEN ***PEOPLE*** ARE BROKEN.
ALL YOUR SMASHING HAS BEEN TO KEEP PEOPLE TOGETHER. YOU'RE LIKE ME. YOU WANT TO ***BUILD!***
THIS BETTER NOT BE ONE OF THOSE "WE'RE NOT SO DIFFERENT, YOU AND I" BAD-GUY SPEECHES.
NO, MY PALE TRAINWRECK, IT COMES DOWN TO THIS. YOU AND I DISAGREE ON WHAT THIS NEIGHBORHOOD SHOULD BE.
BUT WE DON'T DISAGREE THAT THERE SHOULD BE A NEIGHBORHOOD.

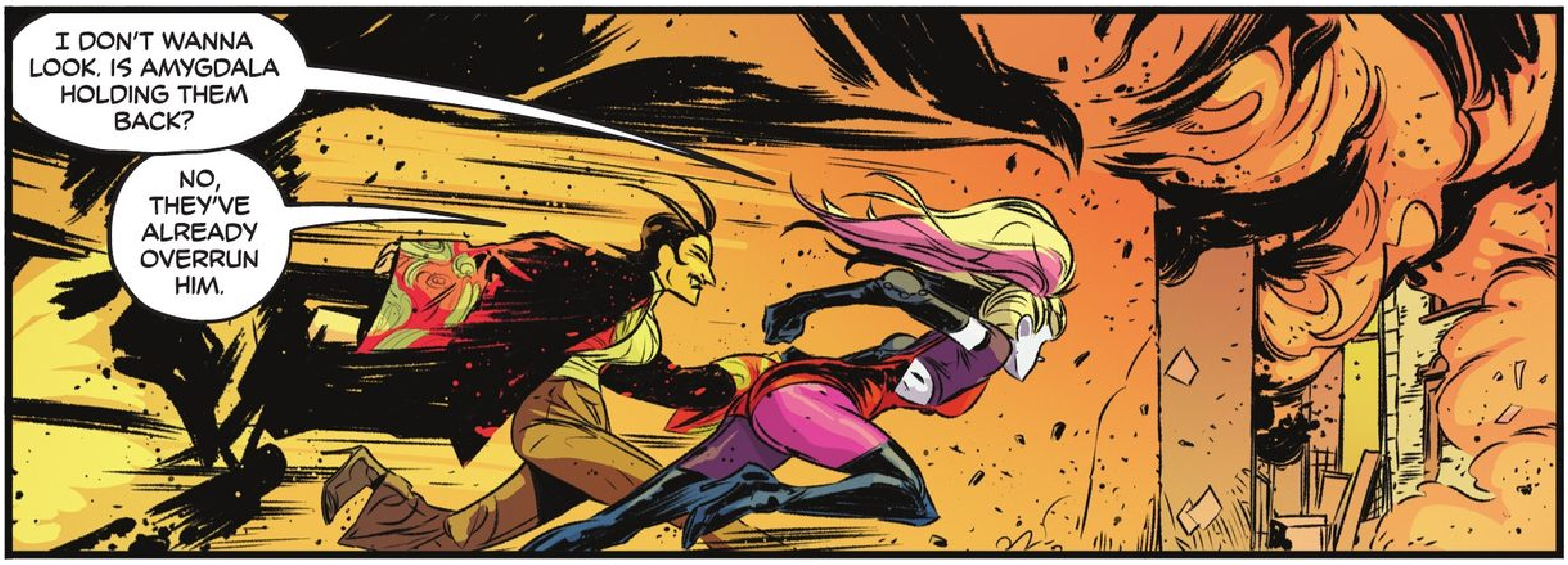

HOLD ON, IS MRS. GRIMALDI OKAY?
YOU SEE? YOU'VE ALWAYS CARED ABOUT PEOPLE. YOU JUST HAVE A HARD TIME LETTING THEM CARE ABOUT **YOU.**
IT'S A REAL KICK IN THE PANTS WHEN YOUR NEMESIS GETS EMOTIONALLY OBSERVANT.
I **SO** WISH I HAD SOMEONE TO PUNCH ABOUT NOW.
THERE'S ALTHEA KLANG! THE RINGLEADER OF THIS CONDO-MINIAL CONSPIRACY!
WAS KIND OF HOPING THE PEOPLE I COULD PUNCH WOULDN'T BE THE EXACT SAME PEOPLE I WAS TRYING TO SAVE, BUT I GUESS IT'LL HAVE TO DO.
I REFUSE TO HAVE A MESSAGE!

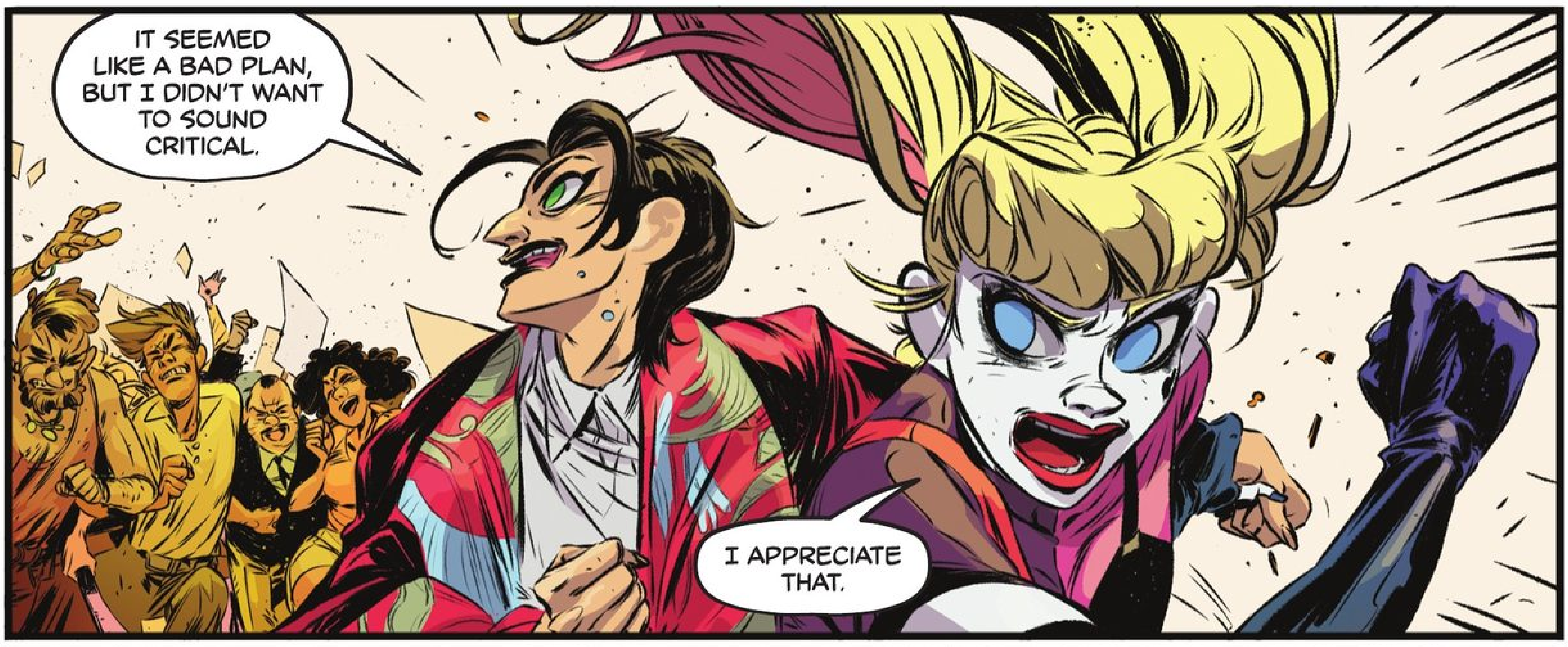

WE'RE GONNA TEAR HER LIMB FROM LIMB! THE LAST COMMUNAL THING WE'LL EVER DO!
PROTECT ME, HARLEY!
IT SPEAKS VOLUMES ABOUT MY MESSED-UP PSYCHOLOGY THAT I'M EVEN *MORE* ATTRACTED TO YOU AFTER SEEIN' YOU TOTALLY CRUMBLE!
SYMPATHY! ATTRACTION! MORE CONSPIRACIES TO ELIMINATE!
BAD ANGRY MOB! NOW KNOCK IT OFF, OR I'M GONNA HAVE TO SPANK YOU!
AN' THERE'S NO WORSE SPANKIN'--
--THAN A SPANKIN' FROM A CLOWN!

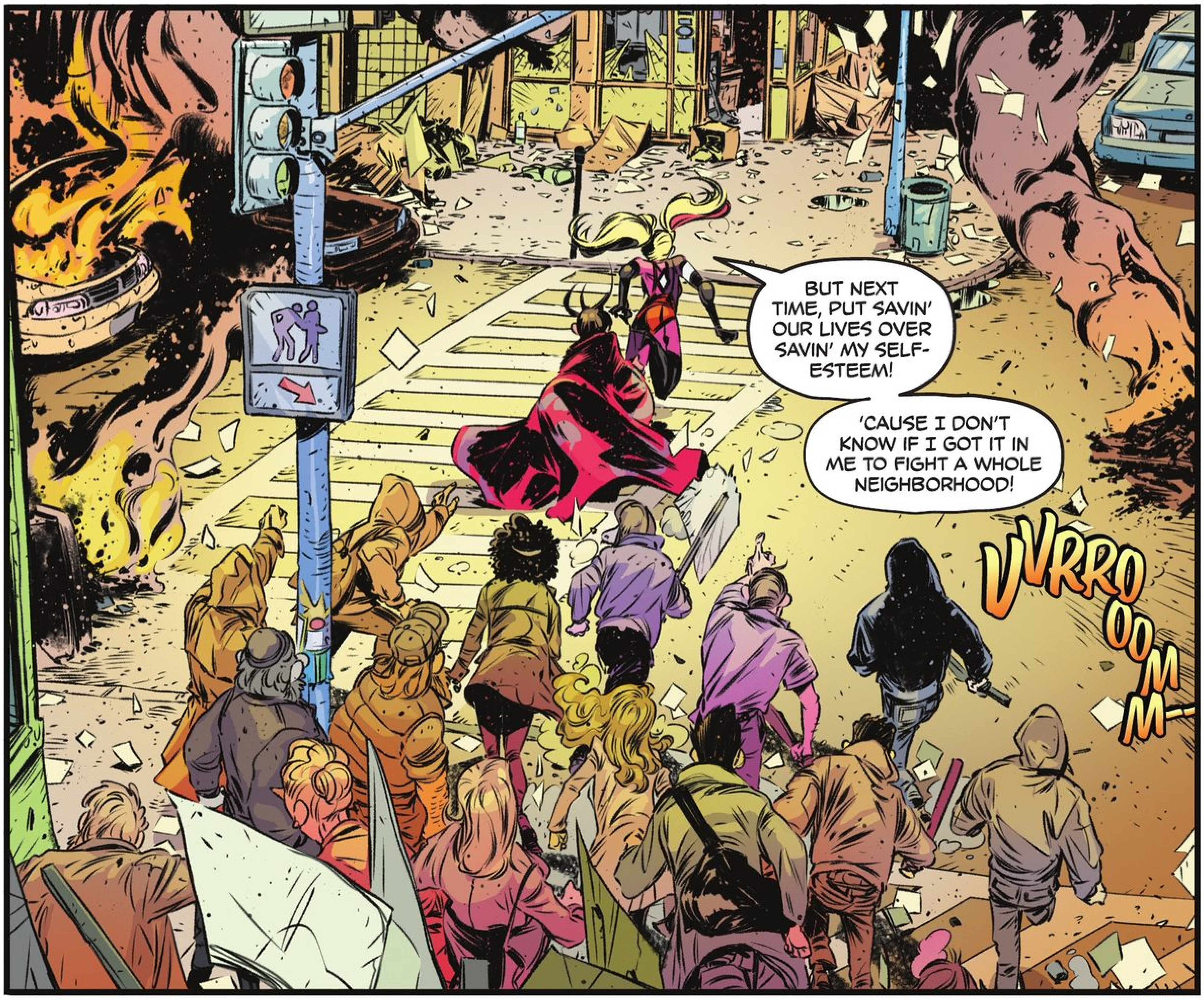

COME ON, KLANG-Y, LET'S KEEP MOVIN'! CAN'T LET THE UNNECESSARY VIOLENCE DISTRACT US FROM THE NECESSARY VIOLENCE!
THEY TRIED TO KILL US! AN' AFTER I BAKED ALL THOSE STUPID PIES FOR THE BLOCK PARTY! NEVER AGAIN, I'LL TELL YOU THAT!
I REJECT THE CONSPIRACY OF FRIENDSHIP WE WERE ONCE COMPLICIT IN!
AW NO, CHICKEN FINGERS? THE DECONSTIPATOR GUY GOT TO YOU, TOO?
YOU GOTTA FIGHT IT, CF! YOU'RE THE BEST GUY I KNOW!
CLAIMING KNOWLEDGE OF OTHERS IS A CONSPIRACY OF CONTROL THROUGH OBSERVATION!

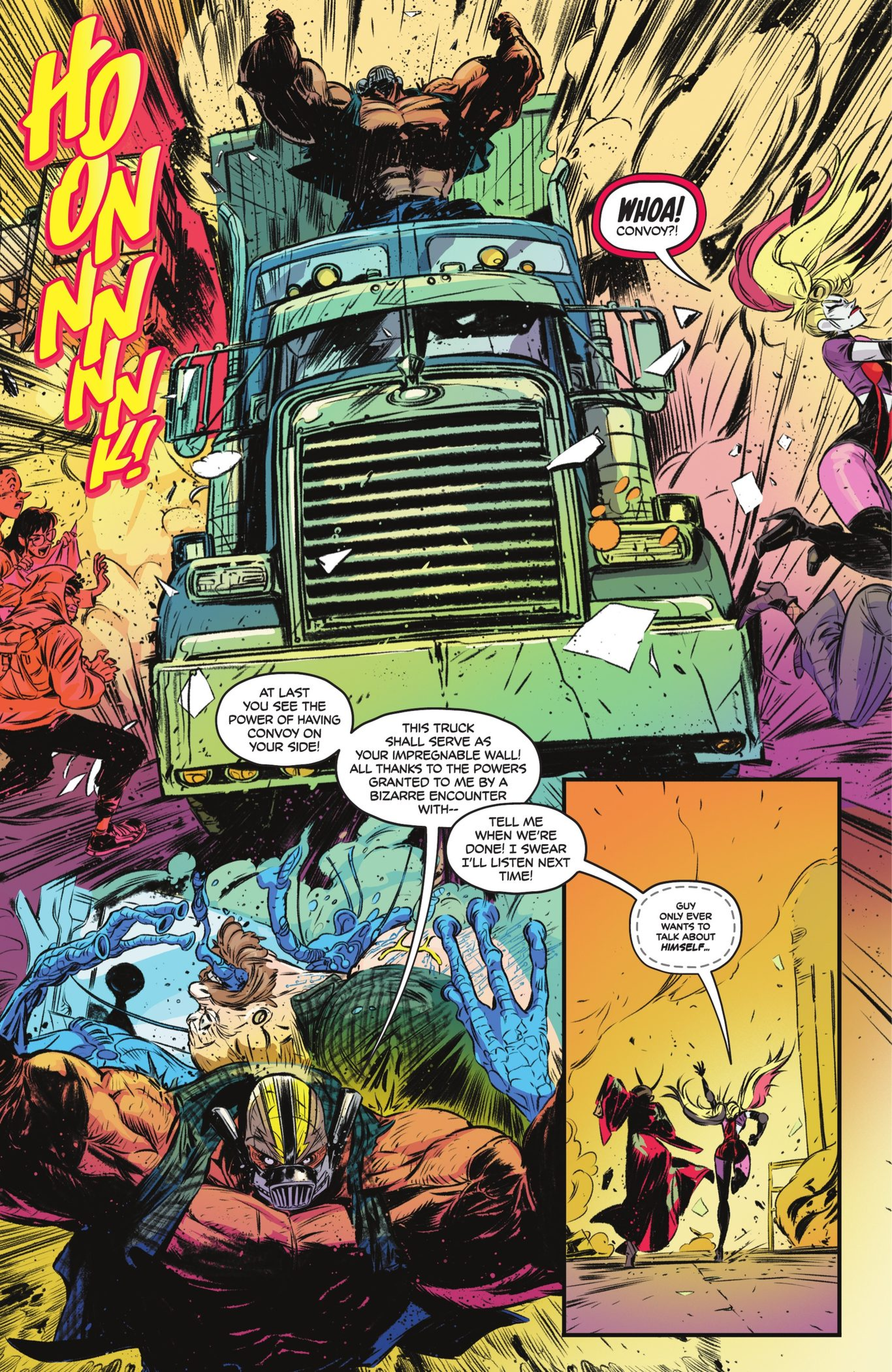

DON'T GIVE IN TO THIS NIHILISTIC BUTT-TALK! YOU WERE THE ONE WHO ALWAYS TOLD ME FRIENDSHIP AND STUFF WERE GOOD THINGS.
IT TOOK GETTIN' SHOT AND RIDIN' A TAPIR, BUT NOW I AGREE WITH YOU!
IF IRONY WASN'T A CONSPIRACY OF IMPOSED DRAMATIC MEANING, I'D SAY HOW IRONIC IT IS THAT YOU'RE NOW BEGGING FOR CONNECTION AS I DEVOTE MY LIFE TO CATASTROPHIC INDIVIDUALITY.
HOO BOY, OF ALL THE MEN IN MY LIFE TO KILL ME, THIS IS THE LAST ONE I HAD MONEY ON.
AN' I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO HIT HIM BACK!
AMYGDALA WON'T LET SMELLY MAN HURT BOSS'S GIRLFRIEND.
THANKS FOR THE SAVE, MYGGY, THOUGH OUR STATUS IS MORE OF AN "IT'S COMPLICATED."

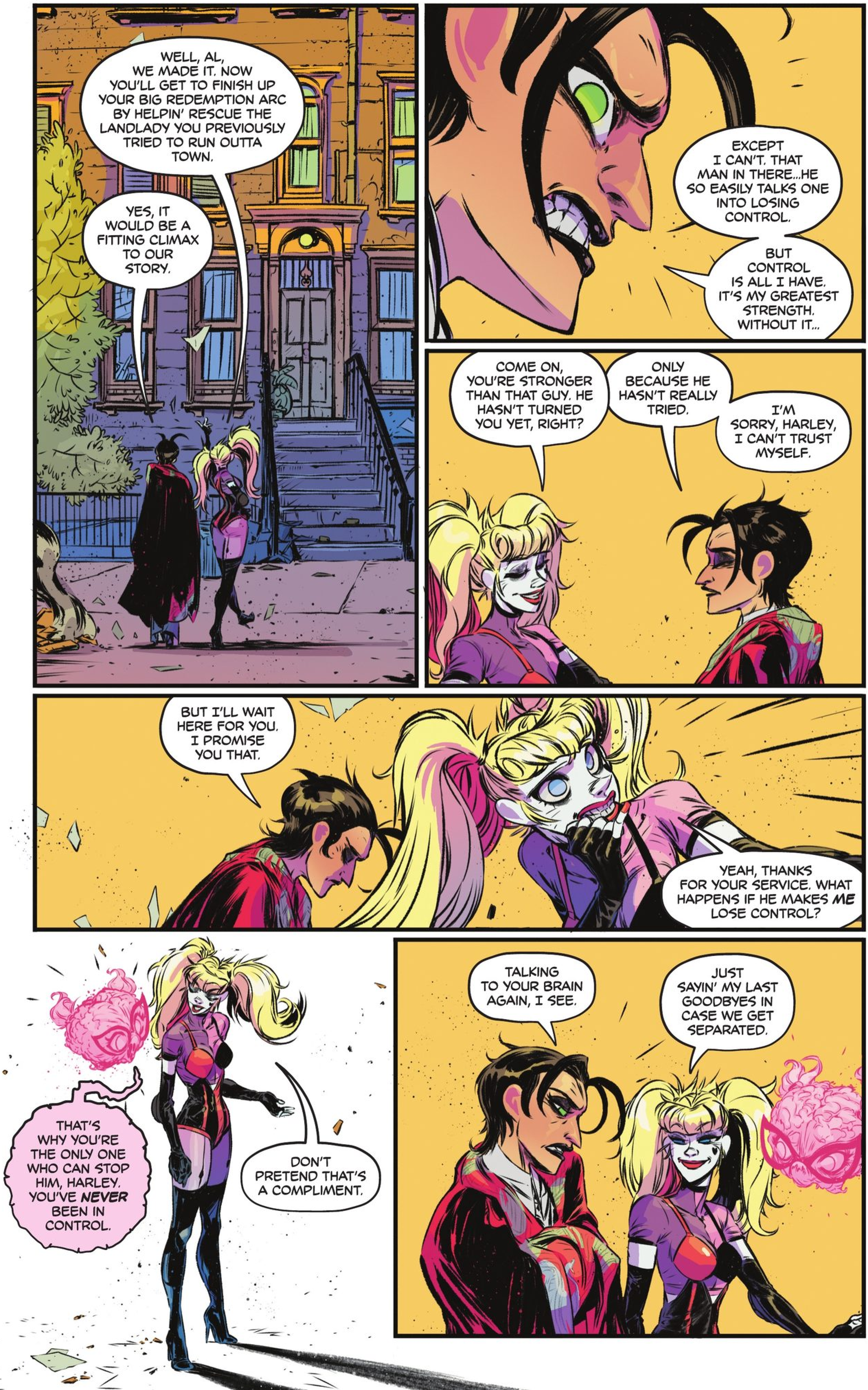

UNHAND ME, YOU TOOL OF OPPRESSIVE SOCIAL COHESION!
Um...NO?
WHERE'S MRS. GRIMALDI, FINGIES? I GOTTA SAVE HER FROM HERSELF.
IMPOSSIBLE. THE DECONSPIRATOR IS IN HER HOME RIGHT NOW, FREEING HER MIND.
WELL THANKS FOR THAT CINEMATICALLY CLIMACTIC COINKY-DINK, NERDY GOD WHO RUNS MY LIFE!
WHAT?
EH, JUST ME GOIN' A LITTLE MORE INSANE EACH DAY.
POW
COVER US, MYGGY, BUT GENTLE WITH CHICKEN FINGERS! HE'S SPECIAL TO ME!
AMYGDALA WILL BE PERFECT BRUTAL GENTLEMAN!

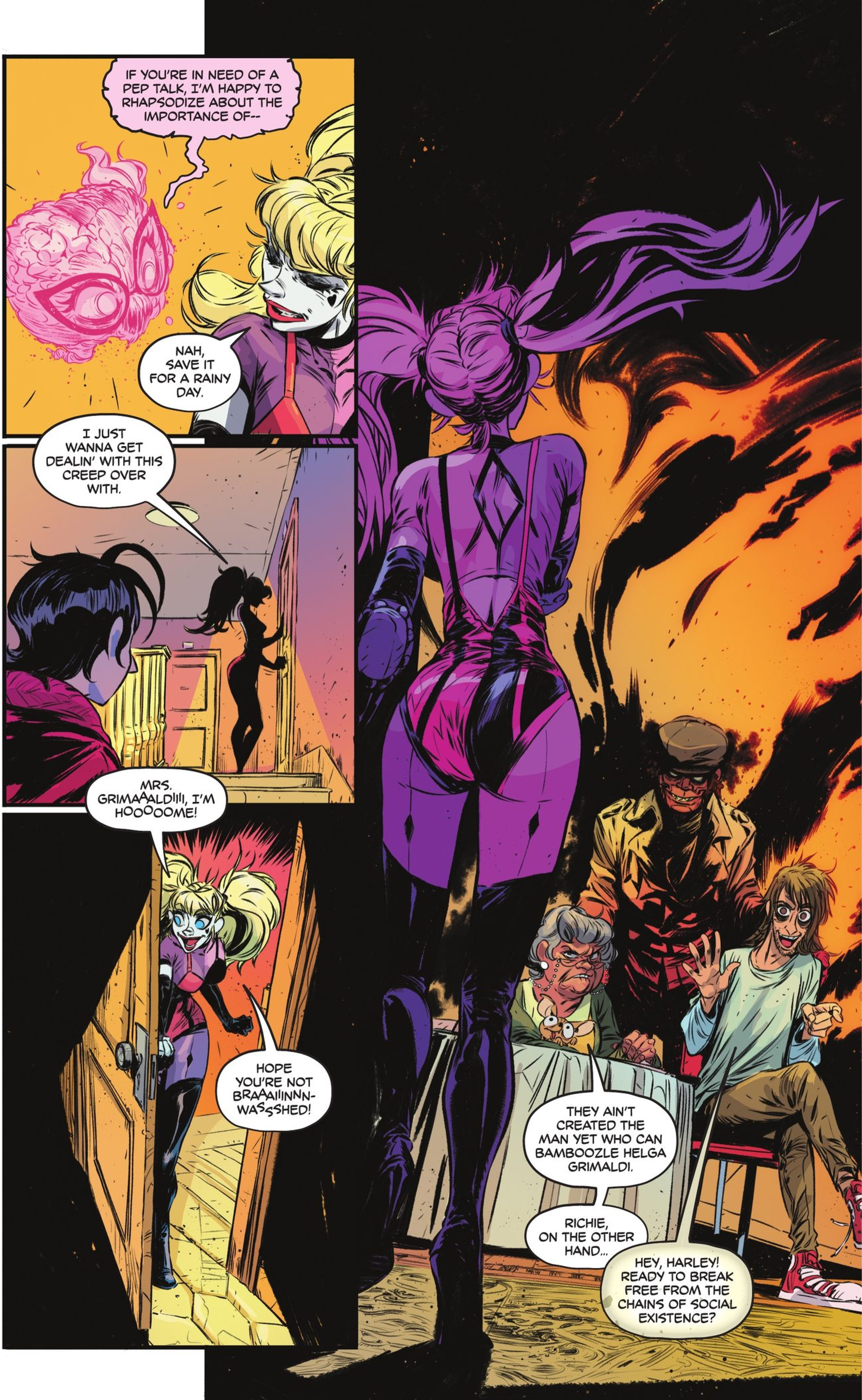

I DON'T WANNA LOOK. IS AMYGDALA HOLDING THEM BACK?
NO, THEY'VE ALREADY OVERRUN HIM.

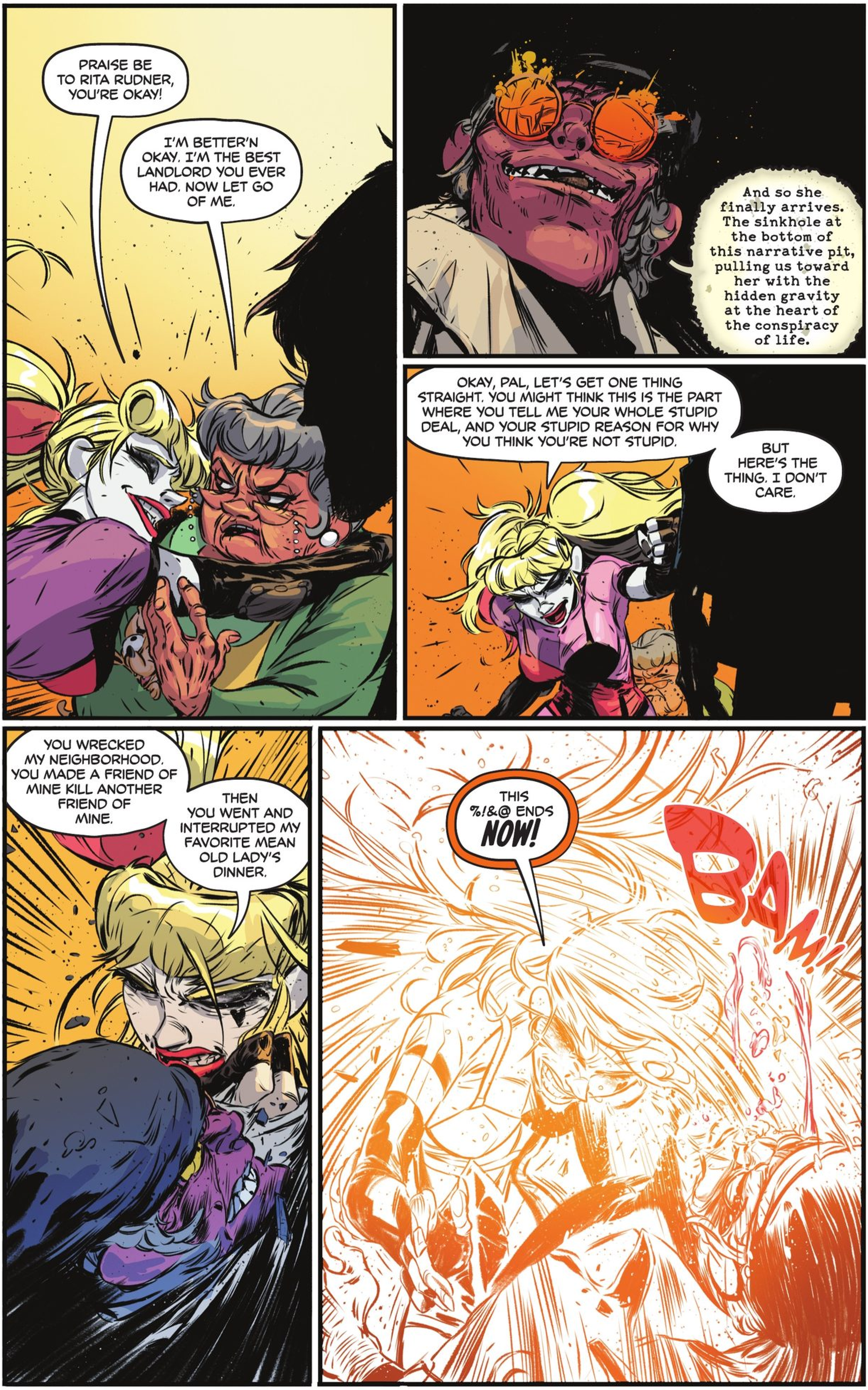

IT SEEMED LIKE A BAD PLAN, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO SOUND CRITICAL.
I APPRECIATE THAT.

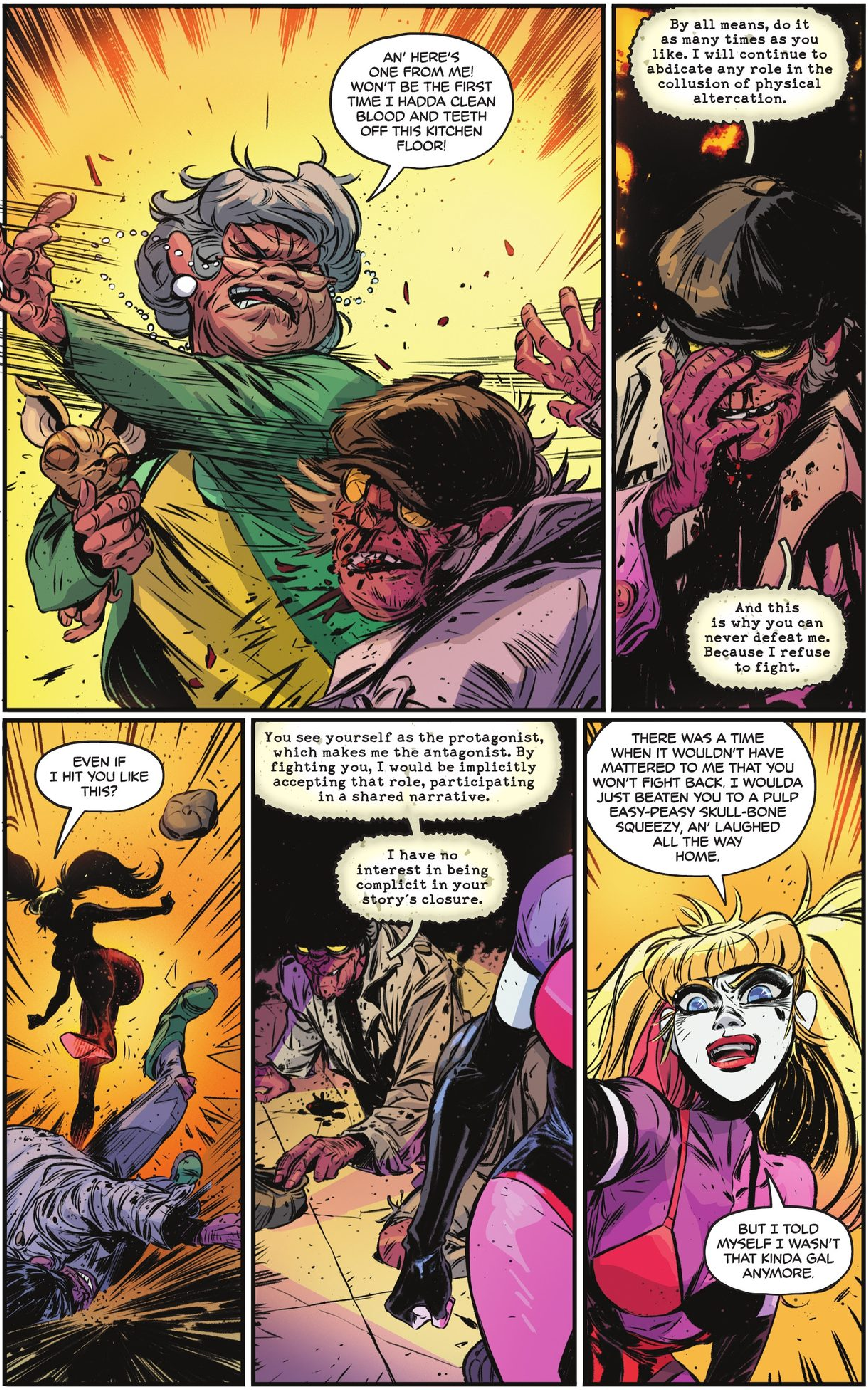

BUT NEXT TIME, PUT SAVIN' OUR LIVES OVER SAVIN' MY SELF-ESTEEM!
'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW IF I GOT IT IN ME TO FIGHT A WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD!
VVRROOOMM—

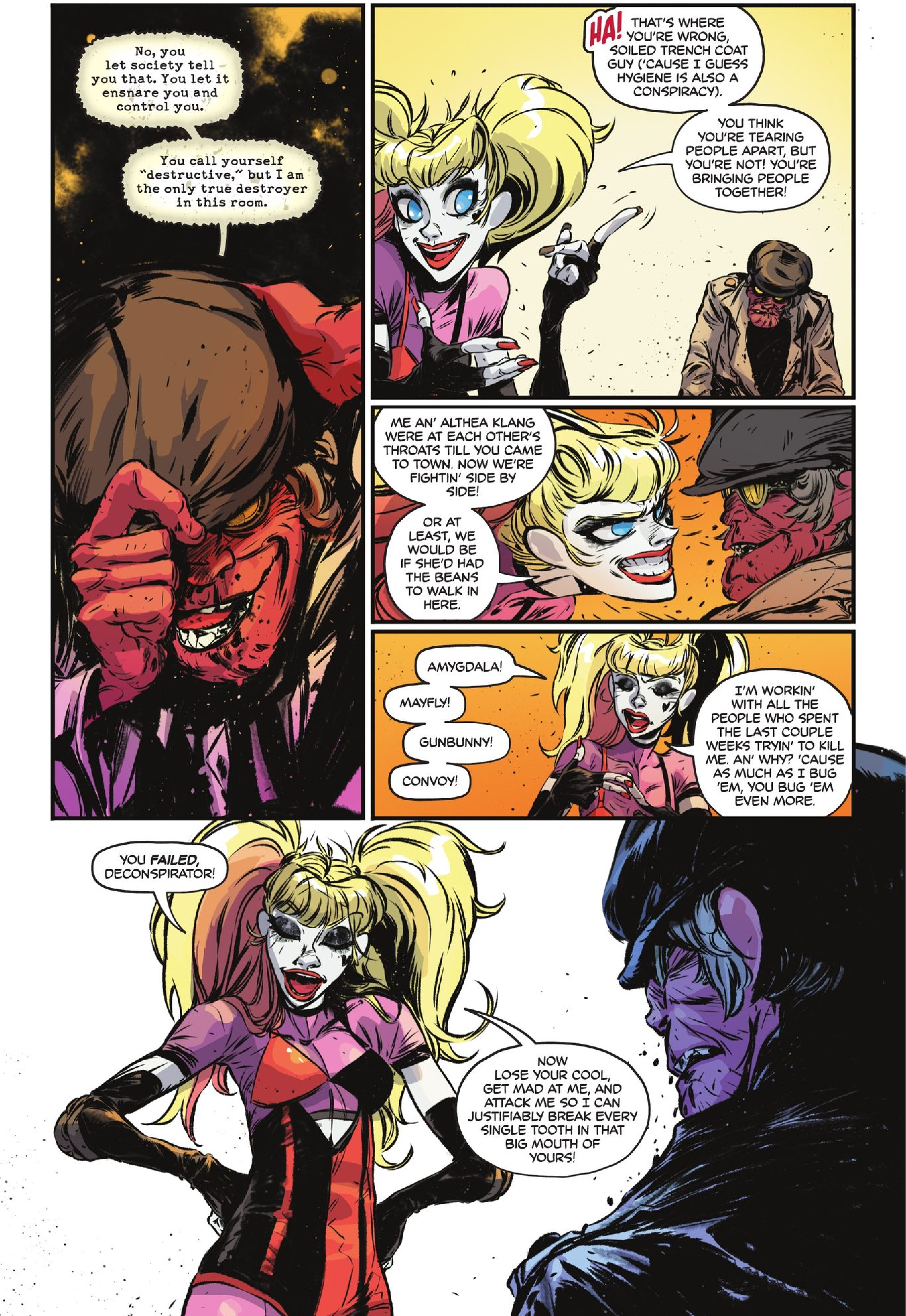

HOONNNNK!
WHOA! CONVOY?!
AT LAST YOU SEE THE POWER OF HAVING CONVOY ON YOUR SIDE!
THIS TRUCK SHALL SERVE AS YOUR IMPREGNABLE WALL! ALL THANKS TO THE POWERS GRANTED TO ME BY A BIZARRE ENCOUNTER WITH--
TELL ME WHEN WE'RE DONE! I SWEAR I'LL LISTEN NEXT TIME!
GUY ONLY EVER WANTS TO TALK ABOUT *HIMSELF*...

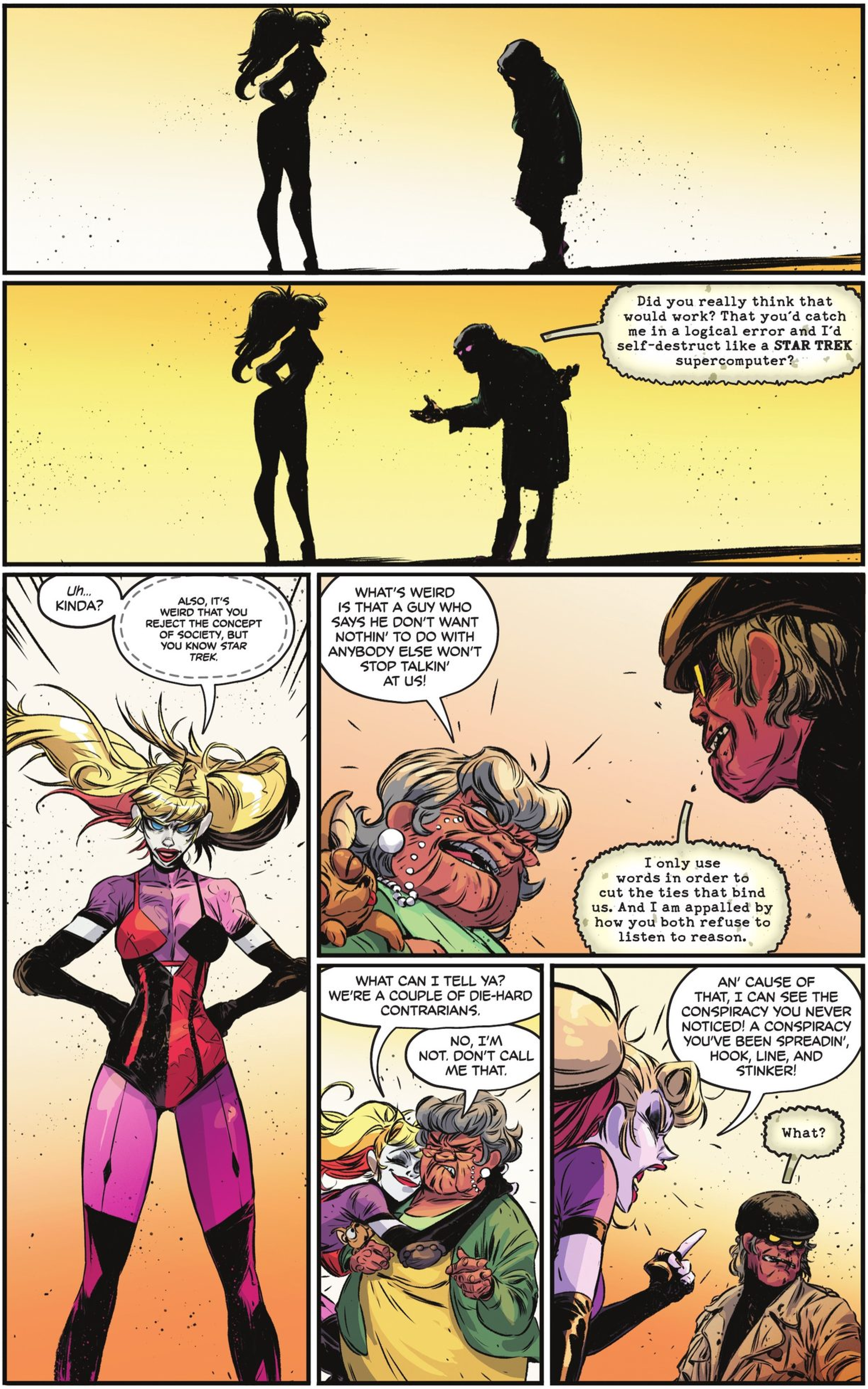

WELL, AL, WE MADE IT. NOW YOU'LL GET TO FINISH UP YOUR BIG REDEMPTION ARC BY HELPIN' RESCUE THE LANDLADY YOU PREVIOUSLY TRIED TO RUN OUTTA TOWN.
YES, IT WOULD BE A FITTING CLIMAX TO OUR STORY.
EXCEPT I CAN'T. THAT MAN IN THERE...HE SO EASILY TALKS ONE INTO LOSING CONTROL.
BUT CONTROL IS ALL I HAVE. IT'S MY GREATEST STRENGTH. WITHOUT IT...
COME ON, YOU'RE STRONGER THAN THAT GUY. HE HASN'T TURNED YOU YET, RIGHT?
ONLY BECAUSE HE HASN'T REALLY TRIED.
I'M SORRY, HARLEY, I CAN'T TRUST MYSELF.
BUT I'LL WAIT HERE FOR YOU. I PROMISE YOU THAT.
YEAH, THANKS FOR YOUR SERVICE. WHAT HAPPENS IF HE MAKES *ME* LOSE CONTROL?
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN STOP HIM, HARLEY. YOU'VE *NEVER* BEEN IN CONTROL.
DON'T PRETEND THAT'S A COMPLIMENT.
TALKING TO YOUR BRAIN AGAIN, I SEE.
JUST SAYIN' MY LAST GOODBYES IN CASE WE GET SEPARATED.

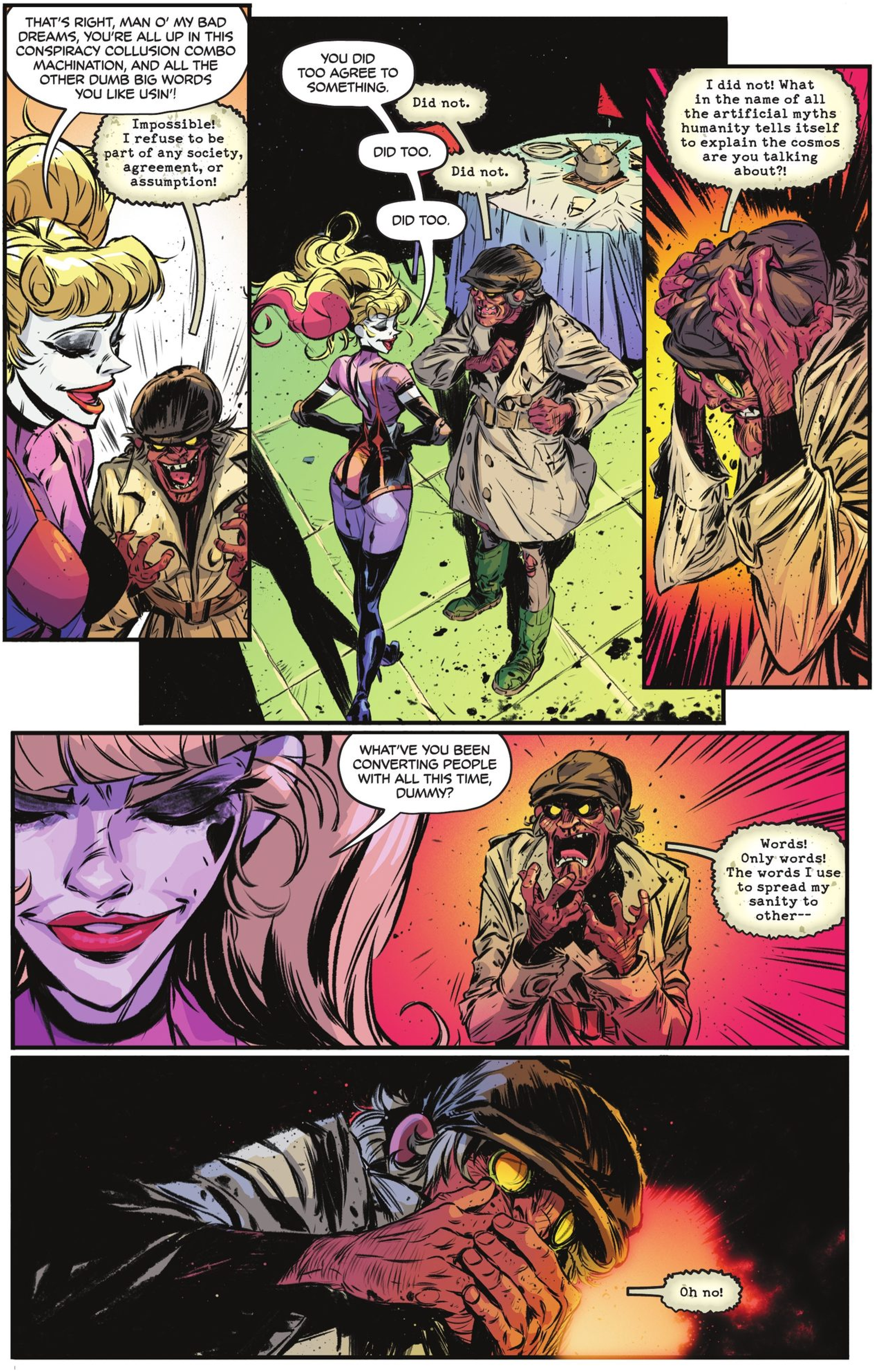

IF YOU'RE IN NEED OF A PEP TALK, I'M HAPPY TO RHAPSODIZE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF--
NAH, SAVE IT FOR A RAINY DAY.
I JUST WANNA GET DEALIN' WITH THIS CREEP OVER WITH.
MRS. GRIMAAALDIIII, I'M HOOOOOME!
HOPE YOU'RE NOT BRAAAIIINNN-WASSSHED!
THEY AIN'T CREATED THE MAN YET WHO CAN BAMBOOZLE HELGA GRIMALDI.
RICHIE, ON THE OTHER HAND...
HEY, HARLEY! READY TO BREAK FREE FROM THE CHAINS OF SOCIAL EXISTENCE?

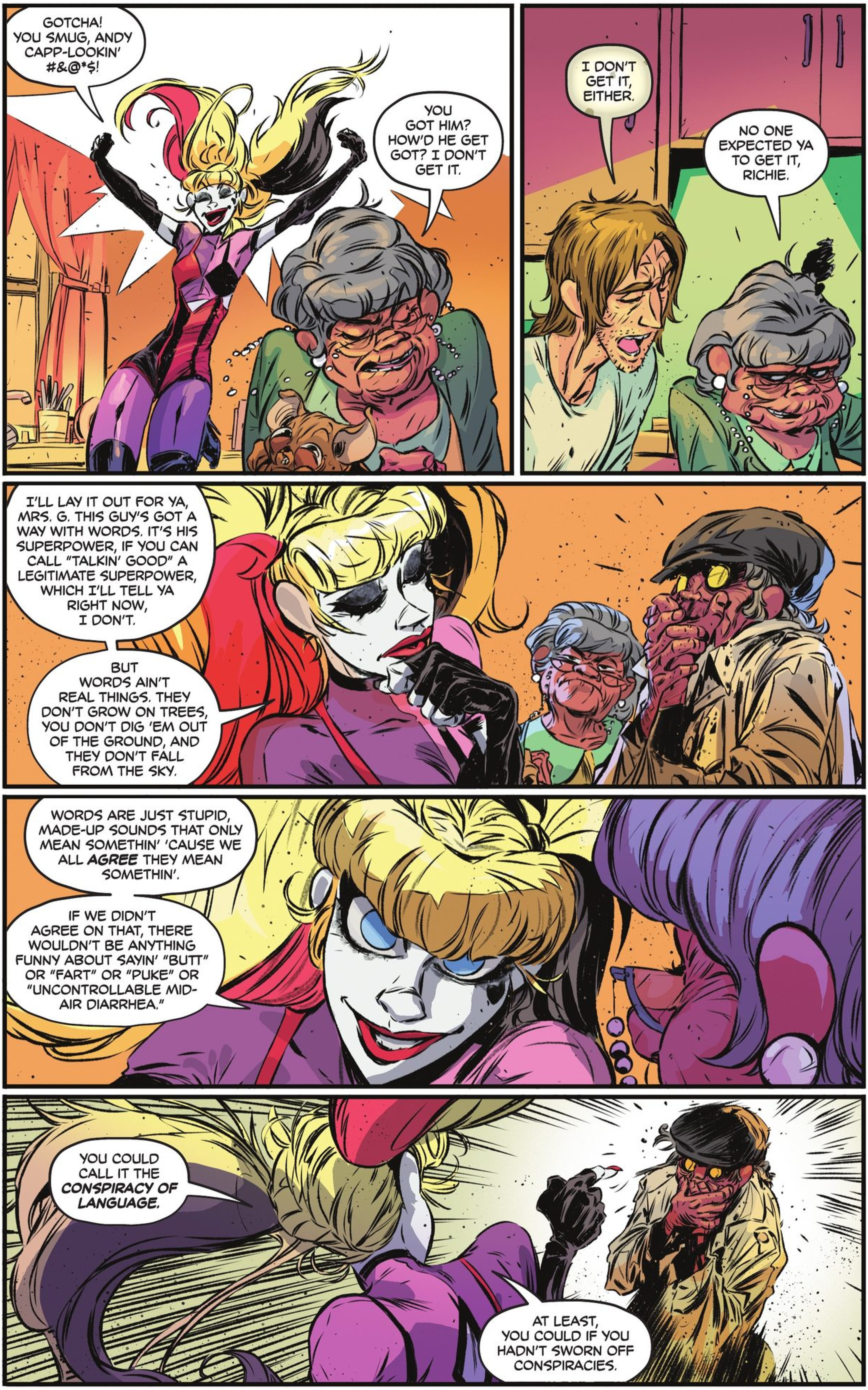

PRAISE BE TO RITA RUDNER, YOU'RE OKAY!
I'M BETTER'N OKAY. I'M THE BEST LANDLORD YOU EVER HAD. NOW LET GO OF ME.
And so she finally arrives. The sinkhole at the bottom of this narrative pit, pulling us toward her with the hidden gravity at the heart of the conspiracy of life.
OKAY, PAL, LET'S GET ONE THING STRAIGHT. YOU MIGHT THINK THIS IS THE PART WHERE YOU TELL ME YOUR WHOLE STUPID DEAL, AND YOUR STUPID REASON FOR WHY YOU THINK YOU'RE NOT STUPID.
BUT HERE'S THE THING. I DON'T CARE.
YOU WRECKED MY NEIGHBORHOOD. YOU MADE A FRIEND OF MINE KILL ANOTHER FRIEND OF MINE.
THEN YOU WENT AND INTERRUPTED MY FAVORITE MEAN OLD LADY'S DINNER.
THIS %!&@ ENDS NOW!
BAM!!

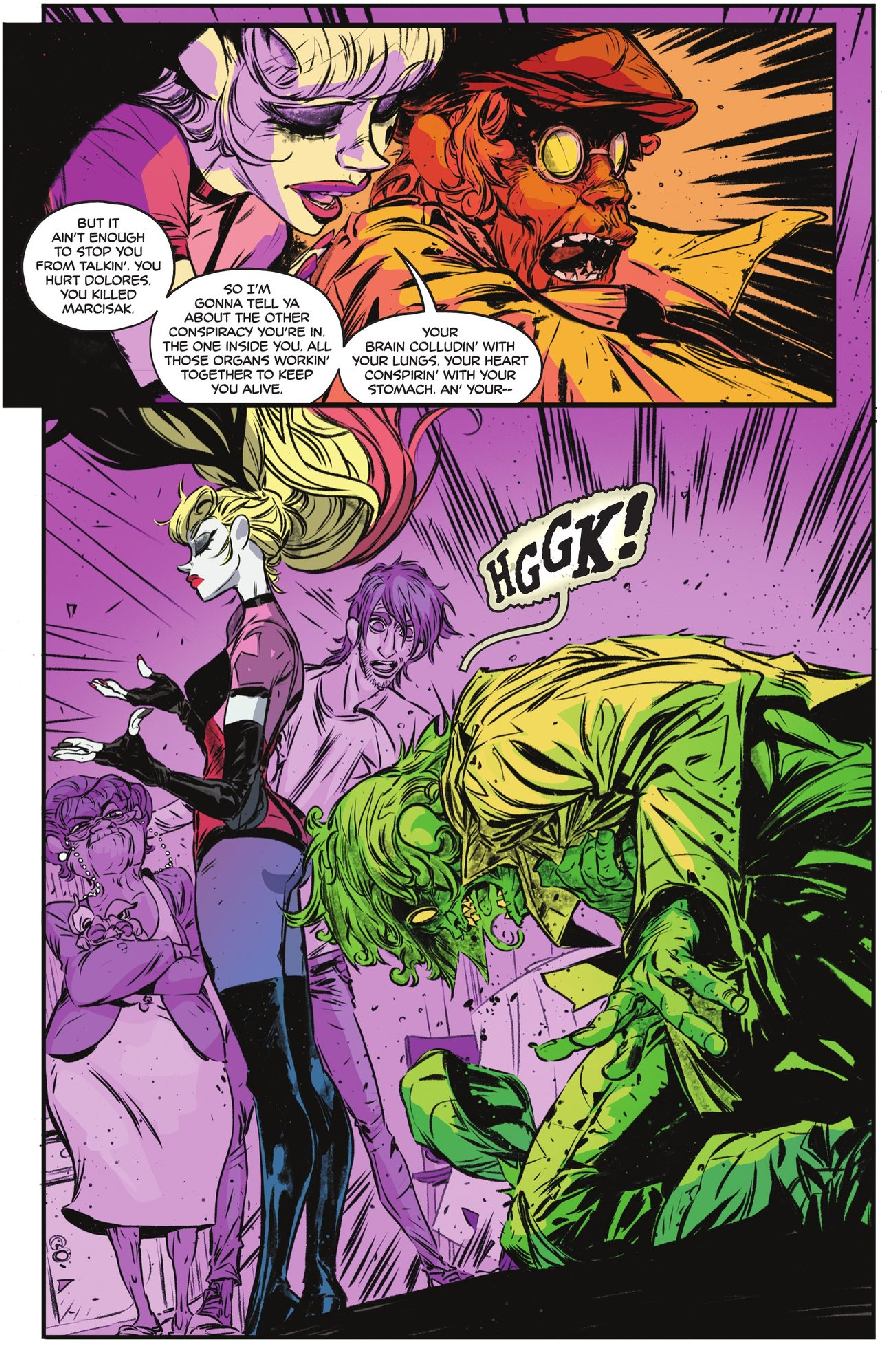

AN' HERE'S ONE FROM ME! WON'T BE THE FIRST TIME I HADDA CLEAN BLOOD AND TEETH OFF THIS KITCHEN FLOOR!
By all means, do it as many times as you like. I will continue to abdicate any role in the collusion of physical altercation.
And this is why you can never defeat me. Because I refuse to fight.
EVEN IF I HIT YOU LIKE THIS?
You see yourself as the protagonist, which makes me the antagonist. By fighting you, I would be implicitly accepting that role, participating in a shared narrative.
I have no interest in being complicit in your story's closure.
THERE WAS A TIME WHEN IT WOULDN'T HAVE MATTERED TO ME THAT YOU WON'T FIGHT BACK. I WOULDA JUST BEATEN YOU TO A PULP EASY-PEASY SKULL-BONE SQUEEZY, AN' LAUGHED ALL THE WAY HOME.
BUT I TOLD MYSELF I WASN'T THAT KINDA GAL ANYMORE.

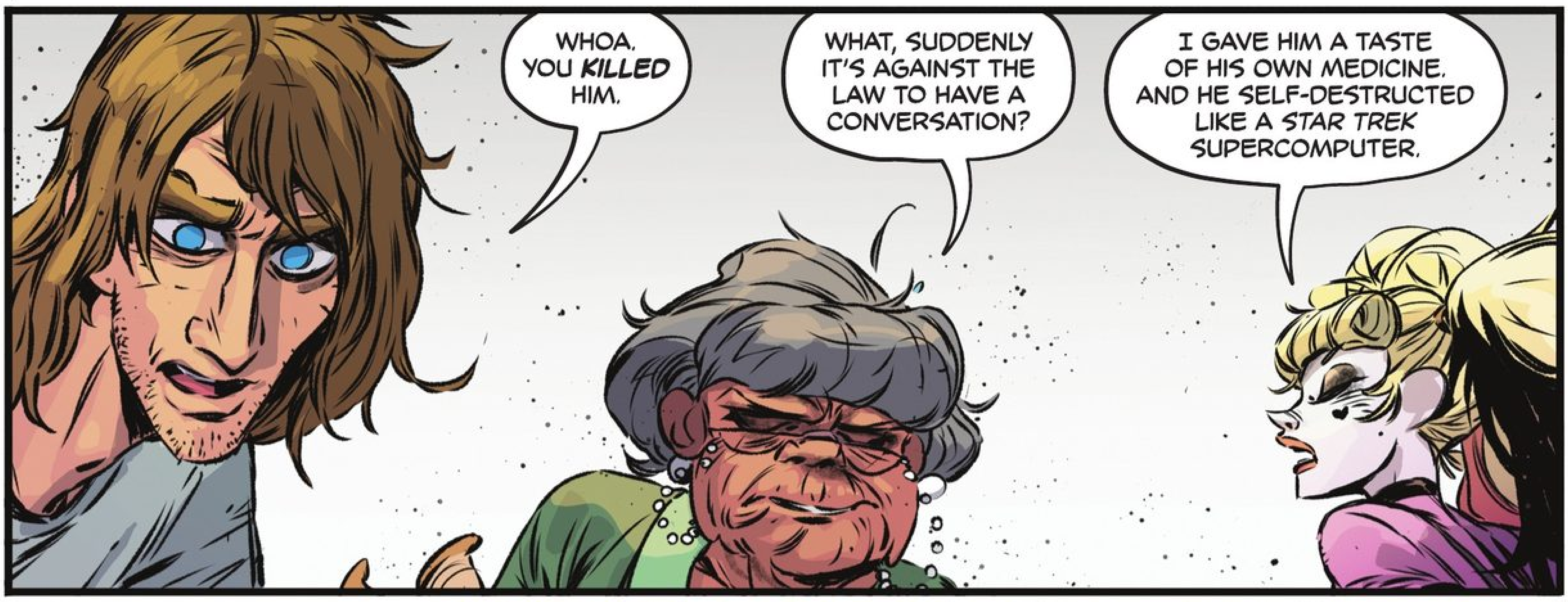

No, you let society tell you that. You let it ensnare you and control you.
You call yourself "destructive," but I am the only true destroyer in this room.
HA! THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, SOILED TRENCH COAT GUY ('CAUSE I GUESS HYGIENE IS ALSO A CONSPIRACY).
YOU THINK YOU'RE TEARING PEOPLE APART, BUT YOU'RE NOT! YOU'RE BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER!
ME AN' ALTHEA KLANG WERE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS TILL YOU CAME TO TOWN. NOW WE'RE FIGHTIN' SIDE BY SIDE!
OR AT LEAST, WE WOULD BE IF SHE'D HAD THE BEANS TO WALK IN HERE.
AMYGDALA!
MAYFLY!
GUNBUNNY!
CONVOY!
I'M WORKIN' WITH ALL THE PEOPLE WHO SPENT THE LAST COUPLE WEEKS TRYIN' TO KILL ME. AN' WHY? 'CAUSE AS MUCH AS I BUG 'EM, YOU BUG 'EM EVEN MORE.
YOU FAILED, DECONSPIRATOR!
NOW LOSE YOUR COOL, GET MAD AT ME, AND ATTACK ME SO I CAN JUSTIFIABLY BREAK EVERY SINGLE TOOTH IN THAT BIG MOUTH OF YOURS!

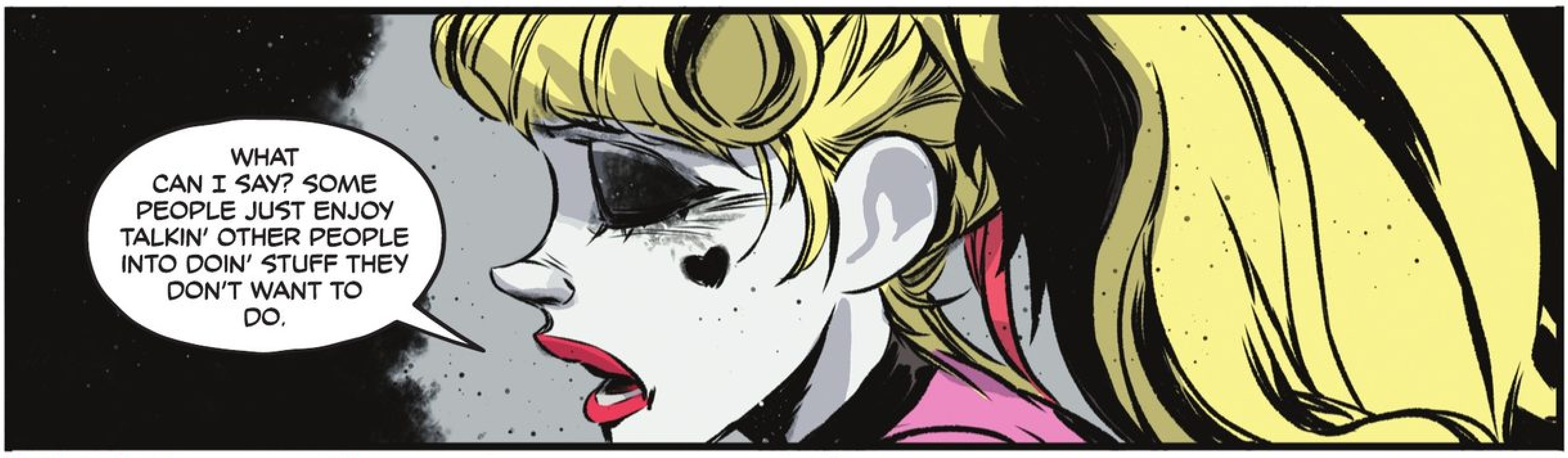

Did you really think that would work? That you'd catch me in a logical error and I'd self-destruct like a **STAR TREK** supercomputer?
Uh... KINDA?
ALSO, IT'S WEIRD THAT YOU REJECT THE CONCEPT OF SOCIETY, BUT YOU KNOW *STAR TREK*.
WHAT'S WEIRD IS THAT A GUY WHO SAYS HE DON'T WANT NOTHIN' TO DO WITH ANYBODY ELSE WON'T STOP TALKIN' AT US!
I only use words in order to cut the ties that bind us. And I am appalled by how you both refuse to listen to reason.
WHAT CAN I TELL YA? WE'RE A COUPLE OF DIE-HARD CONTRARIANS.
NO, I'M NOT. DON'T CALL ME THAT.
AN' CAUSE OF THAT, I CAN SEE THE CONSPIRACY YOU NEVER NOTICED! A CONSPIRACY YOU'VE BEEN SPREADIN', HOOK, LINE, AND STINKER!
What?

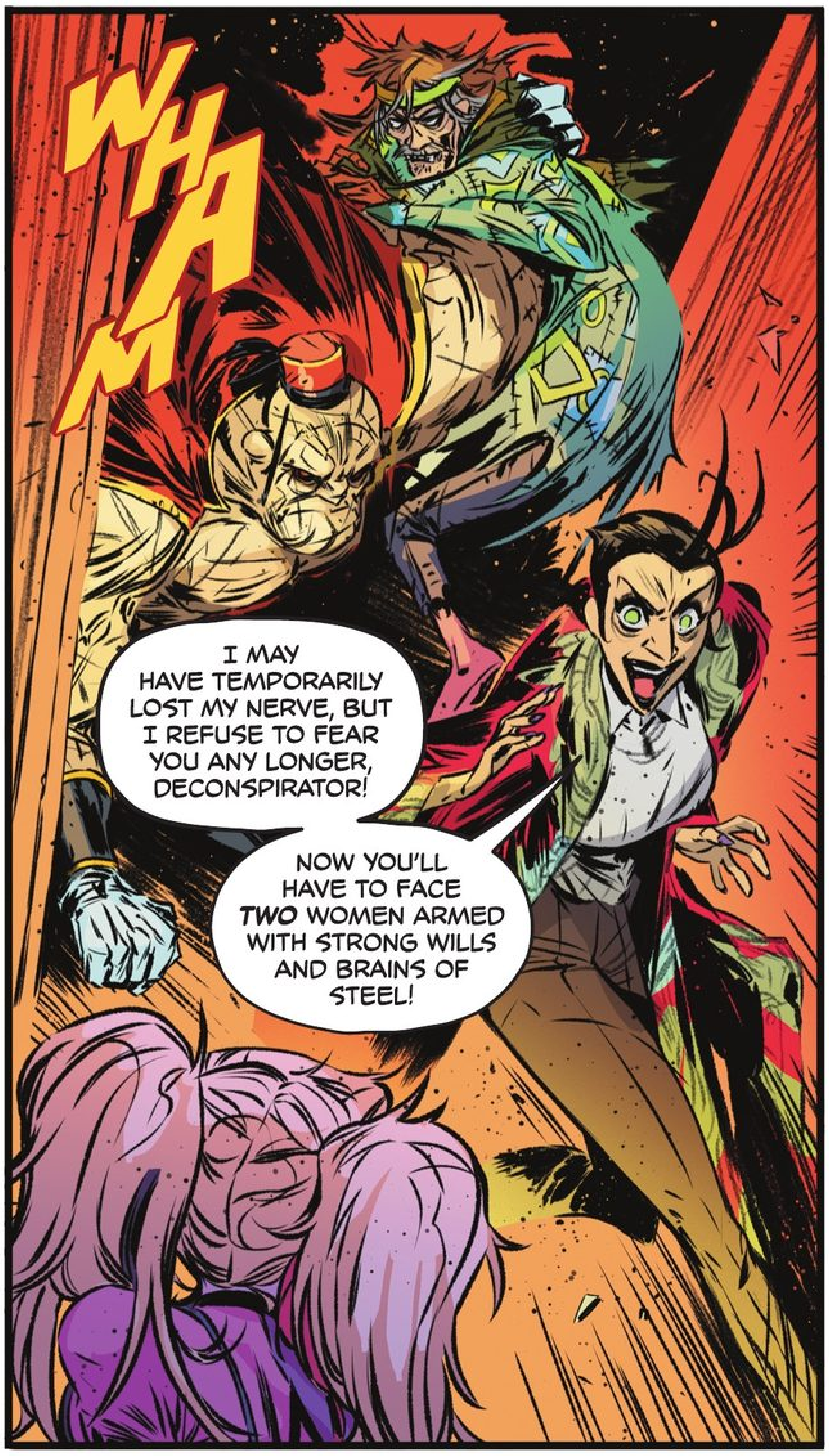

THAT'S RIGHT, MAN O' MY BAD DREAMS, YOU'RE ALL UP IN THIS CONSPIRACY COLLUSION COMBO MACHINATION, AND ALL THE OTHER DUMB BIG WORDS YOU LIKE USIN'!
Impossible! I refuse to be part of any society, agreement, or assumption!
YOU DID TOO AGREE TO SOMETHING.
Did not.
DID TOO.
Did not.
DID TOO.
I did not! What in the name of all the artificial myths humanity tells itself to explain the cosmos are you talking about?!
WHAT'VE YOU BEEN CONVERTING PEOPLE WITH ALL THIS TIME, DUMMY?
Words! Only words! The words I use to spread my sanity to other--
Oh no!

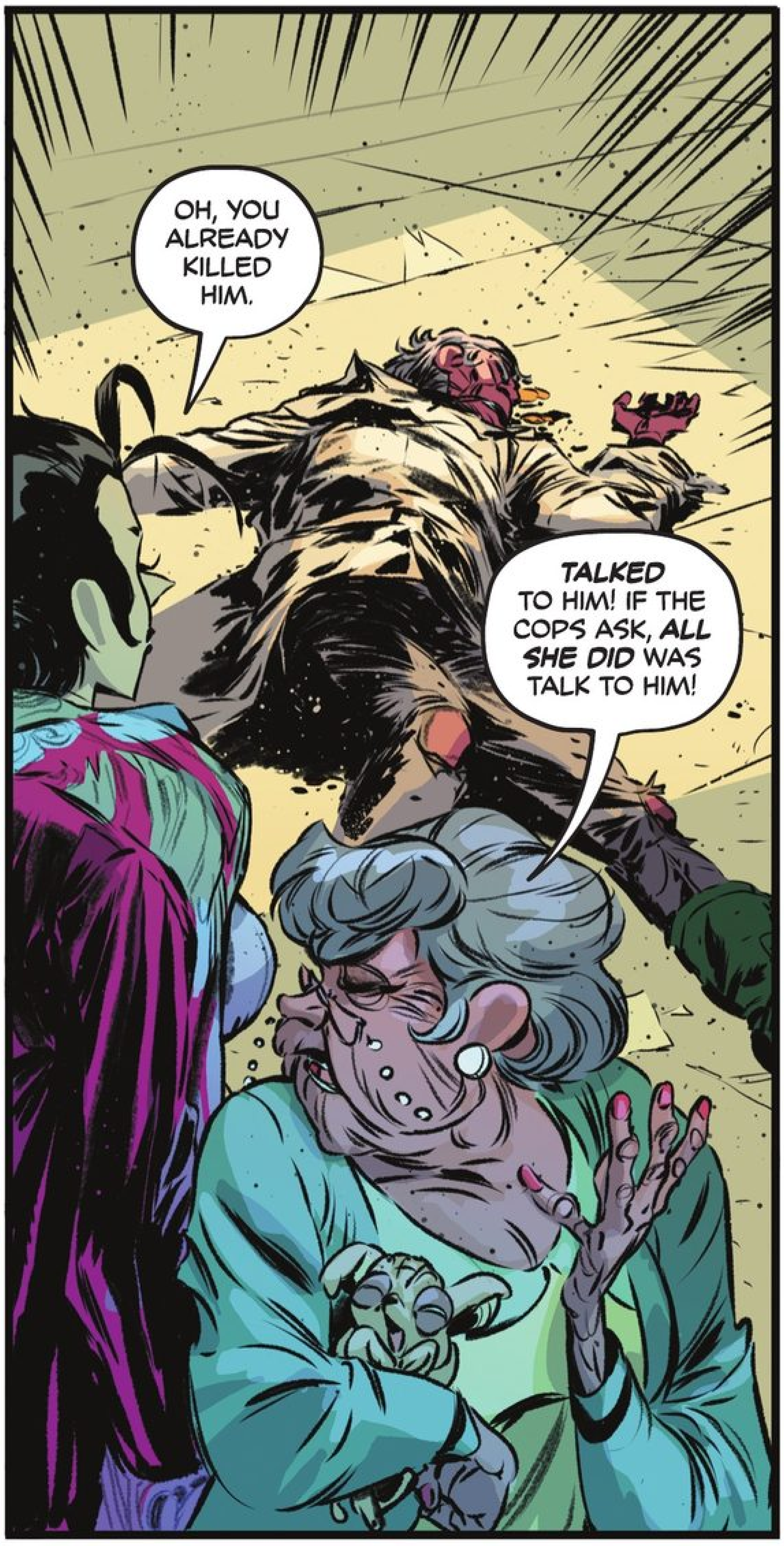

GOTCHA! YOU SMUG, ANDY CAPP-LOOKIN' #&@*$!
YOU GOT HIM? HOW'D HE GET GOT? I DON'T GET IT.
I DON'T GET IT, EITHER.
NO ONE EXPECTED YA TO GET IT, RICHIE.
I'LL LAY IT OUT FOR YA, MRS. G. THIS GUY'S GOT A WAY WITH WORDS. IT'S HIS SUPERPOWER, IF YOU CAN CALL "TALKIN' GOOD" A LEGITIMATE SUPERPOWER, WHICH I'LL TELL YA RIGHT NOW, I DON'T.
BUT WORDS AIN'T REAL THINGS. THEY DON'T GROW ON TREES, YOU DON'T DIG 'EM OUT OF THE GROUND, AND THEY DON'T FALL FROM THE SKY.
WORDS ARE JUST STUPID, MADE-UP SOUNDS THAT ONLY MEAN SOMETHIN' 'CAUSE WE ALL *AGREE* THEY MEAN SOMETHIN'.
IF WE DIDN'T AGREE ON THAT, THERE WOULDN'T BE ANYTHING FUNNY ABOUT SAYIN' "BUTT" OR "FART" OR "PUKE" OR "UNCONTROLLABLE MID-AIR DIARRHEA."
YOU COULD CALL IT THE ***CONSPIRACY OF LANGUAGE.***
AT LEAST, YOU COULD IF YOU HADN'T SWORN OFF CONSPIRACIES.

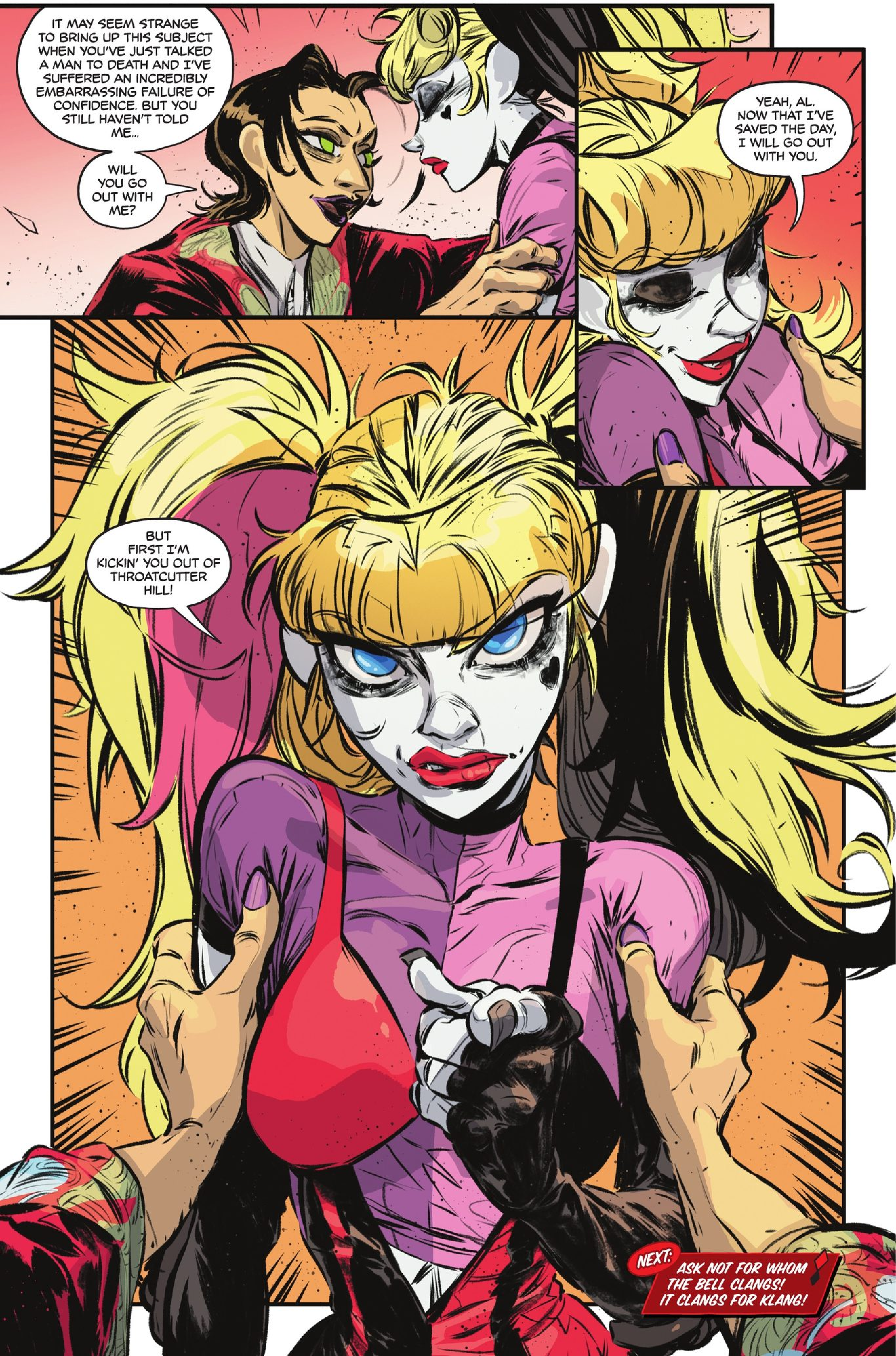

BUT IT AIN'T ENOUGH TO STOP YOU FROM TALKIN'. YOU HURT DOLORES. YOU KILLED MARCISAK.
SO I'M GONNA TELL YA ABOUT THE OTHER CONSPIRACY YOU'RE IN. THE ONE INSIDE YOU. ALL THOSE ORGANS WORKIN' TOGETHER TO KEEP YOU ALIVE.
YOUR BRAIN COLLUDIN' WITH YOUR LUNGS. YOUR HEART CONSPIRIN' WITH YOUR STOMACH. AN' YOUR--
HGGK!


WHOA. YOU *KILLED* HIM.
WHAT, SUDDENLY IT'S AGAINST THE LAW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
I GAVE HIM A TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE. AND HE SELF-DESTRUCTED LIKE A *STAR TREK* SUPERCOMPUTER.


WHAT CAN I SAY? SOME PEOPLE JUST ENJOY TALKIN' OTHER PEOPLE INTO DOIN' STUFF THEY DON'T WANT TO DO.


WHAM
I MAY HAVE TEMPORARILY LOST MY NERVE, BUT I REFUSE TO FEAR YOU ANY LONGER, DECONSPIRATOR!
NOW YOU'LL HAVE TO FACE *TWO* WOMEN ARMED WITH STRONG WILLS AND BRAINS OF STEEL!


OH, YOU ALREADY KILLED HIM.
TALKED TO HIM! IF THE COPS ASK, ***ALL SHE DID*** WAS TALK TO HIM!


IT MAY SEEM STRANGE TO BRING UP THIS SUBJECT WHEN YOU'VE JUST TALKED A MAN TO DEATH AND I'VE SUFFERED AN INCREDIBLY EMBARRASSING FAILURE OF CONFIDENCE. BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME...
WILL YOU GO OUT WITH ME?
YEAH, AL. NOW THAT I'VE SAVED THE DAY, I WILL GO OUT WITH YOU.
BUT FIRST I'M KICKIN' YOU OUT OF THROATCUTTER HILL!
NEXT: ASK NOT FOR WHOM THE BELL CLANGS! IT CLANGS FOR KLANG!

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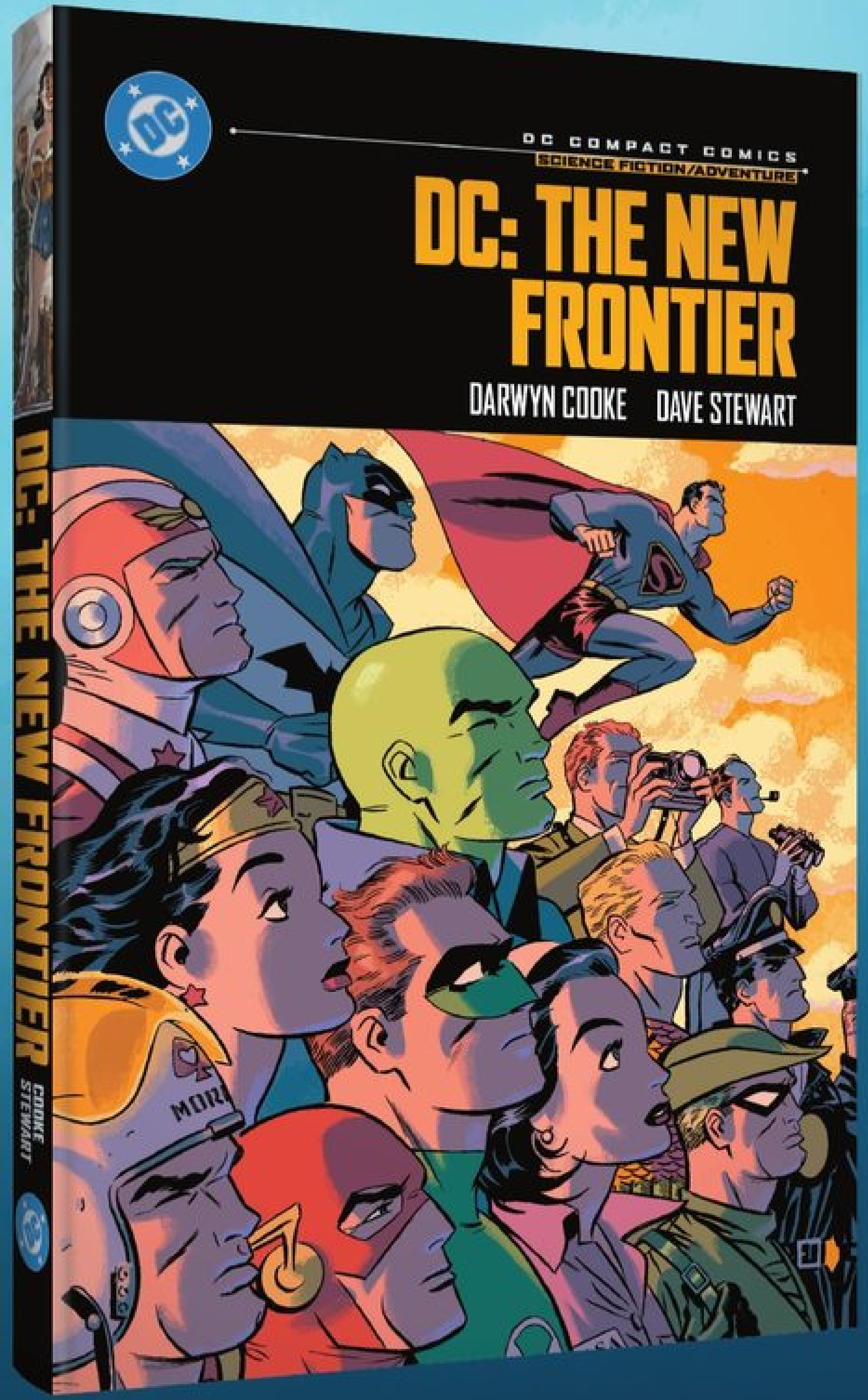
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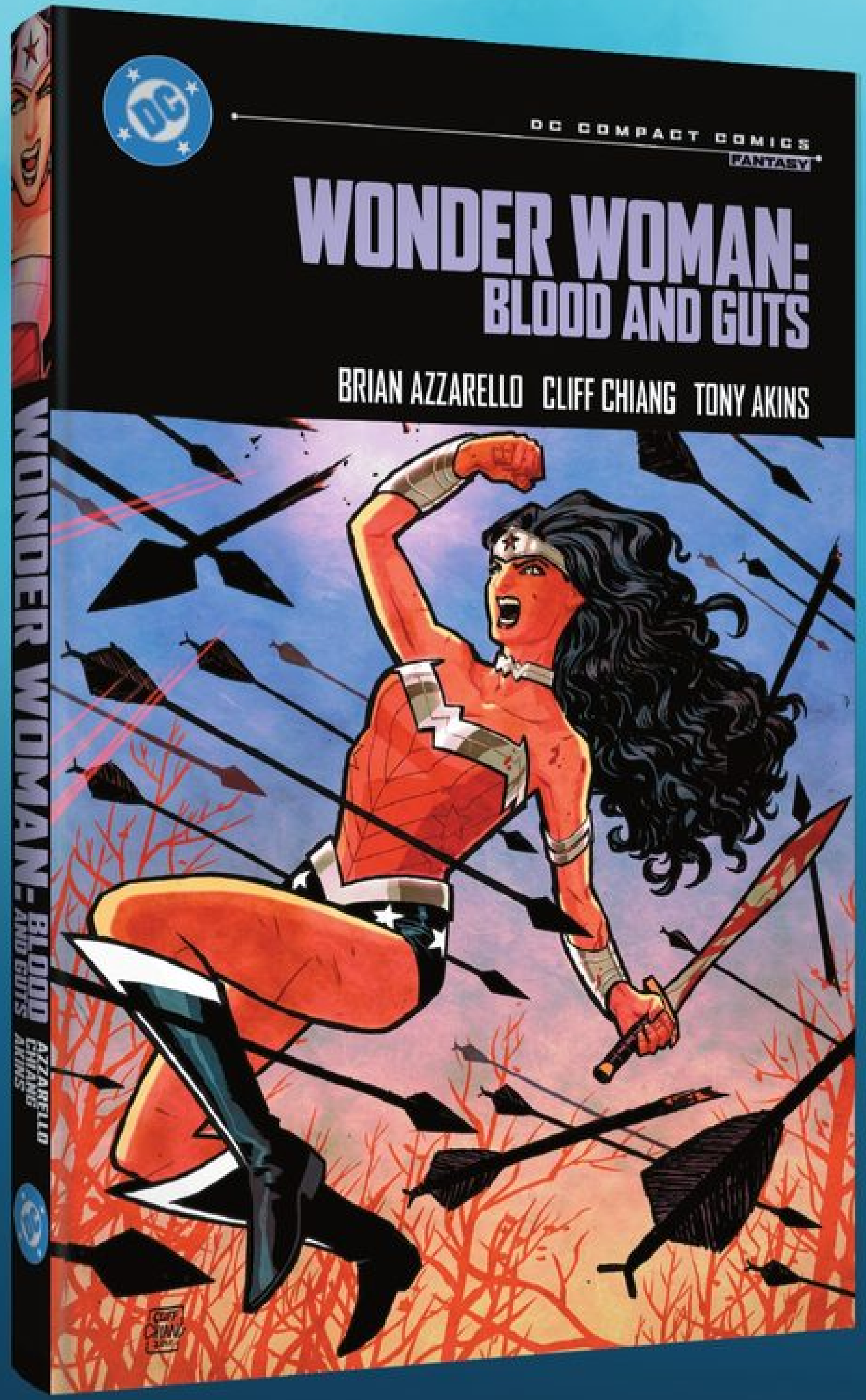
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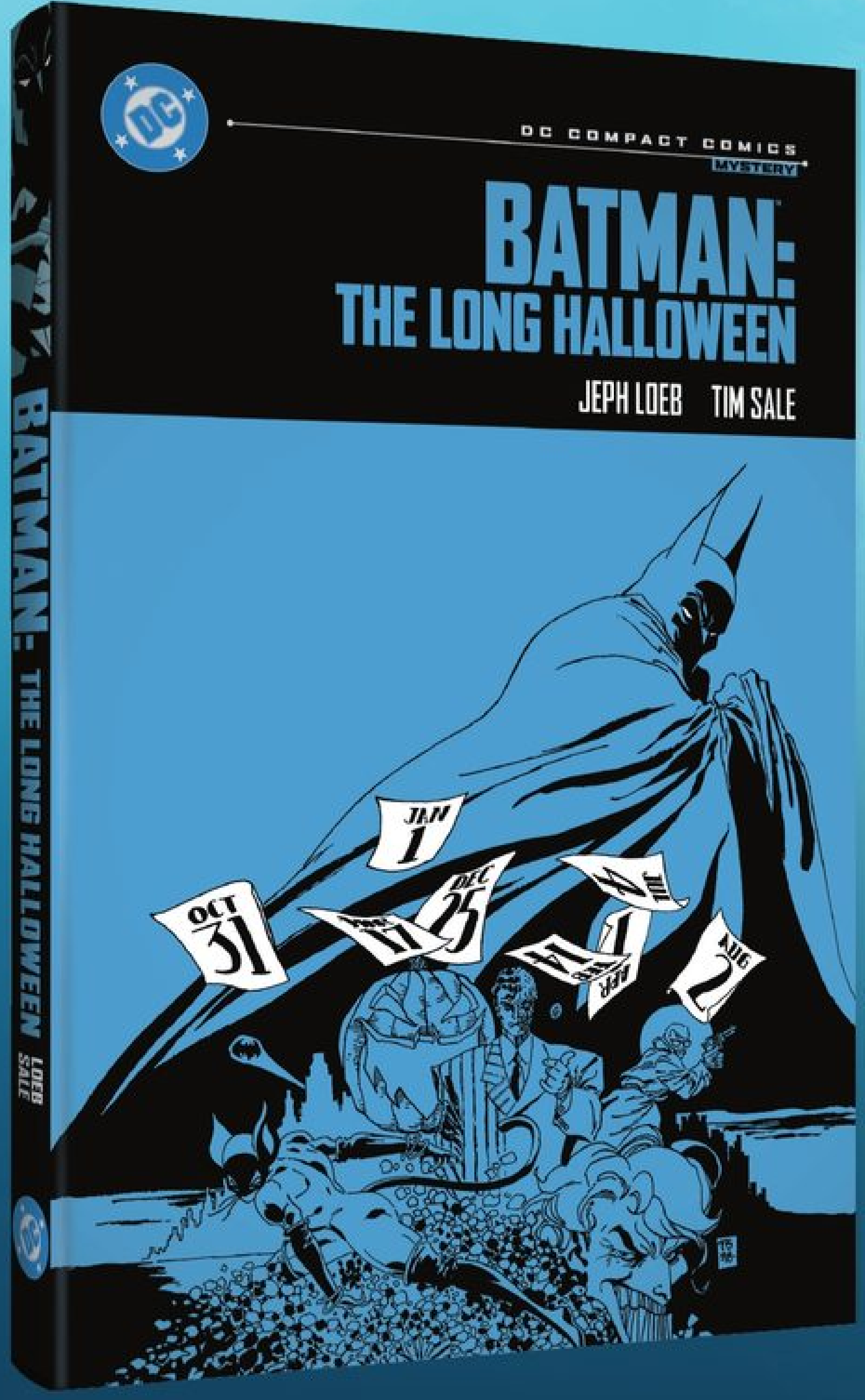
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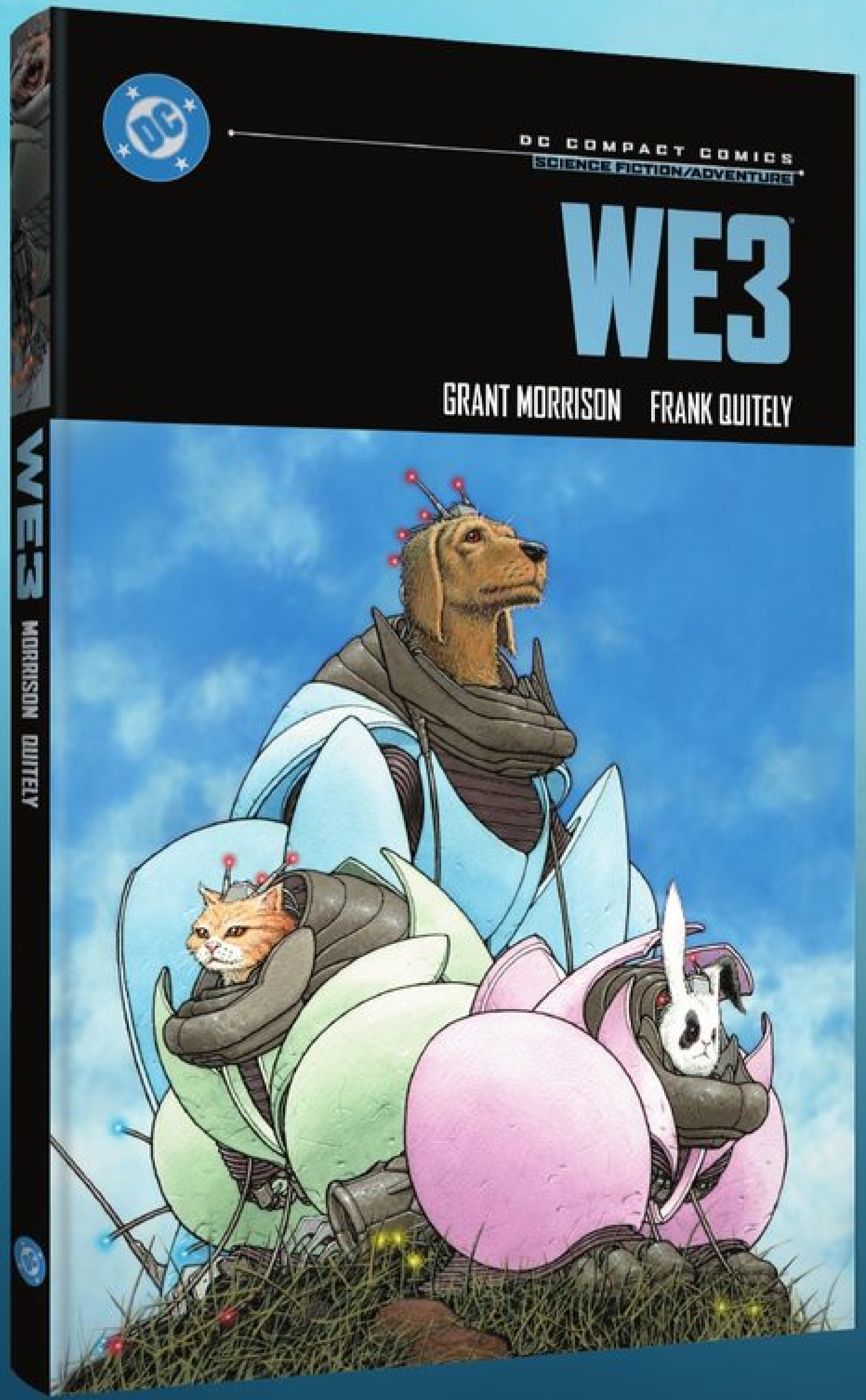
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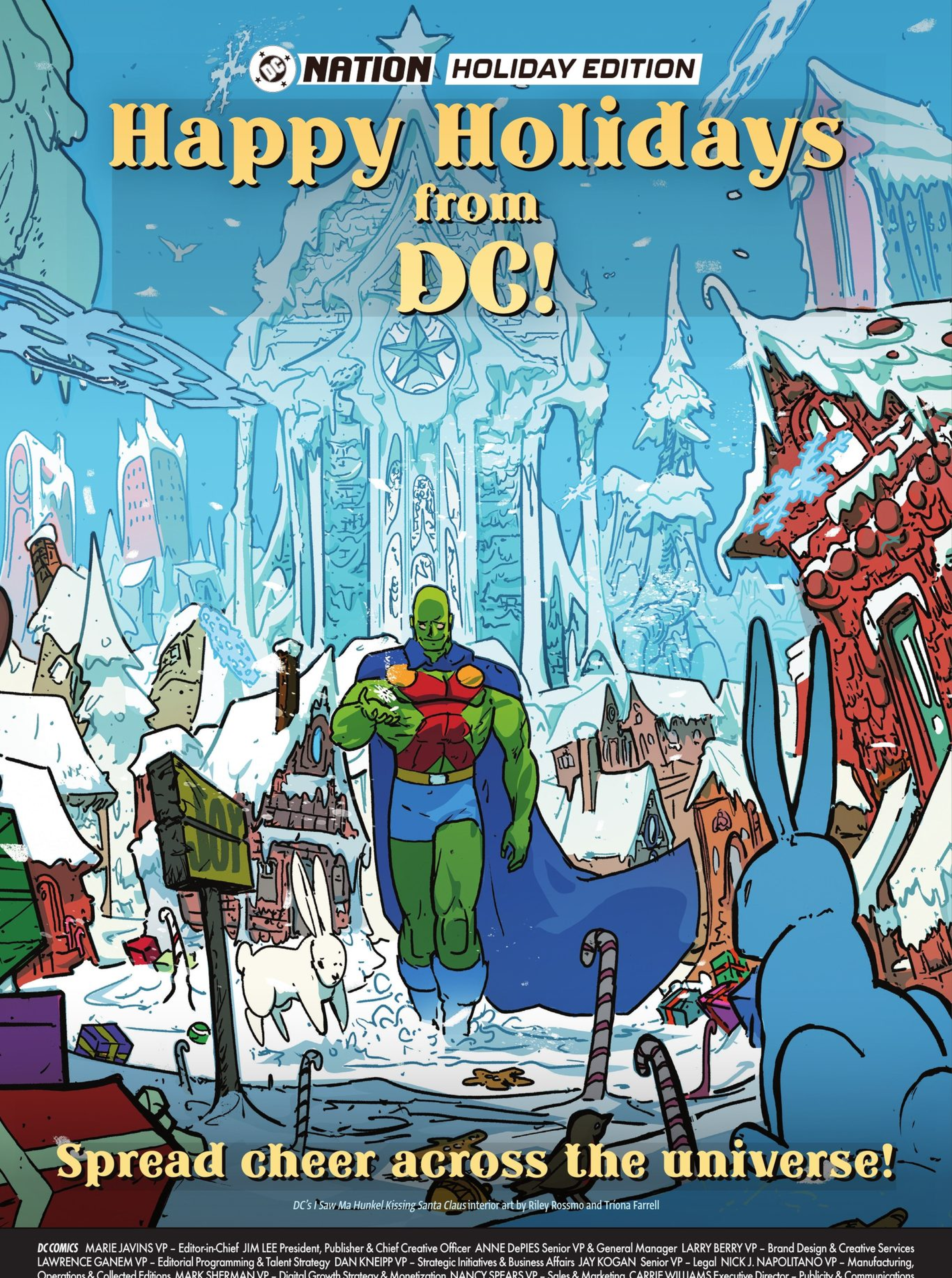
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